HEAR WISCONSIN

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

CELEBRATING 90 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

THANK YOU

BAIRD

Robert W. Baird & Co.

SPECIAL THANK YOU TO BAIRD FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF OUR MISSION.

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NINETY YEARS

OF INTEGRITY, SERVICE, & EXCELLENCE

DEAR FRIENDS,

At the heart of human interaction is communication. The quality of our communication has a direct bearing on the quality of our lives. For nine decades, it has been the mission of HEAR Wisconsin to see to it that those with any degree of hearing loss have the best possible access to language across the continuum of communication options. 2015 was a pivotal year in the extraordinary history of our organization. We successfully completed several strategic initiatives designed to put the agency on a sustainable path and to enable us to think expansively and creatively as we look ahead.

In 2015, we received a major gift from Ray and Kay Eckstein, which enabled us to retire our mortgage and make improvements to our building. As a result of this generous gift, we have a secure and welcoming home for the foreseeable future. Planning has begun on building a state-of-the-art audiology clinic and assistive technology store in our National Avenue facility. By restructuring these two important operating units, we are able serve existing clients more effectively and to expand our practice to reach more people.

As we make these significant structural changes, we are also able to enhance our program offerings. Our Language Access Services team received a major grant to expand distance therapy services in listening and spoken language. CommunicationLink, our sign language interpreting service, has expanded capacity to meet the growing demands for services in several client sectors including healthcare.

The success we have enjoyed is a result of the care and commitment of so many people who believe in our mission. Our Board of Directors provides the leadership and guidance to keep us on the path and ensure our future. The talent and determination of each of our team members as they break down barriers to communication for our clients and patients is awe inspiring. An army of volunteers, many of whom come back year after year, bring joy and energy to our projects and events. We are able to meet the increasing demand for our services thanks to the individuals, businesses and foundations who give so generously to see to it our mission continues. We also value our long-standing partnership with the United Way. Your gifts change lives and we thank you all.

In the pages that follow, we reflect and report on the history and accomplishments of the past ninety years. We also provide a glimpse into the future – a future made possible by all of those who have gone before us, and by the continued support of all who are here with us and for us as we look ahead.

Sincerely,

Richard M. Phalen
Executive Director

1926

Our proud heritage began when a small group of d/Deaf and hard of hearing Milwaukee residents, organized by Herman H. Beyer & Fr. Stephen Klopfer, formed the Milwaukee League for the Hard of Hearing.

1944

The agency was incorporated under the name Milwaukee Society for the Hard of Hearing, which soon changed to the Milwaukee Hearing Society. Programs included a hearing aid loan program, classes for school children, & parent education classes.

1952

A dedicated group of parents & supporters helped the organization grow by expanding programs, training teachers, & adding therapists.

1994

The Center for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (and subsequently the Center for Communication, Hearing & Deafness) added services and revised its mission to be a complete resource for anyone with hearing loss.

2005

The Center found a permanent home when it moved to its current location in West Allis, which provided parking, bus service, and an outdoor play area for our youngest clients. The Center had become the one-stop-shop its founders had envisioned so many years ago.

TODAY

Thanks to the generous support of our donors and the commitment of our dedicated team, the mission of HEAR Wisconsin will continue for many years to come.

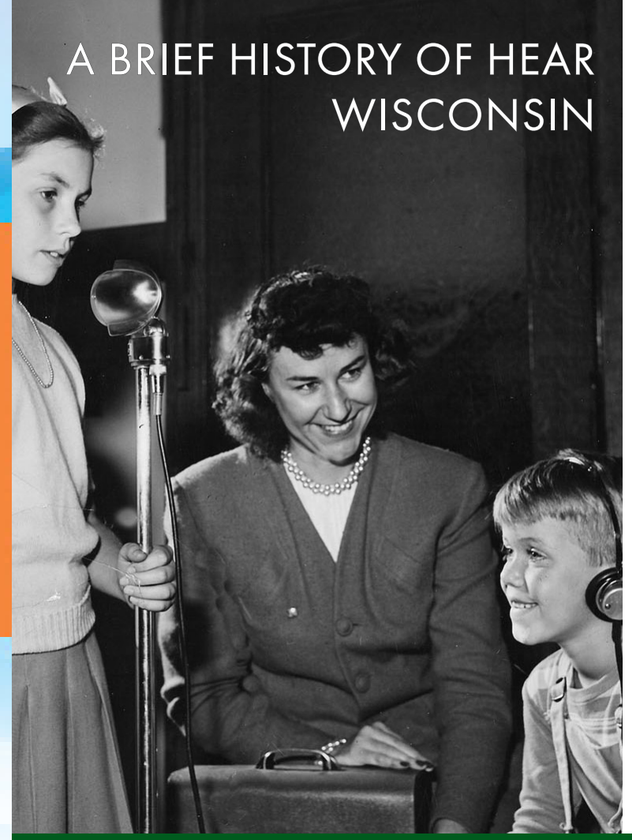
Great Outcomes From True Partnership.

At Baird, we know from 96 years of working with individuals, families and communities that people who care can make a difference. And when those people work together in true partnership toward common goals, they can make great things happen.

Baird is proud to know the caring people of HEAR Wisconsin for 90 years of service to children and adults with hearing loss.

BAIRD

A BRIEF HISTORY OF HEAR WISCONSIN



HEAR Wisconsin started as an informal group of d/Deaf and hard of hearing individuals that met weekly back in 1926. In 1927, two neighbors, Herman H. Beyer and Father Stephen Klopfer, officially formed the Milwaukee League for the Hard of Hearing. Mr. Beyer was hard of hearing himself and Father Klopfer was a teacher at St. John's School for the Deaf. They held the first meeting of the Milwaukee League for the Hard of Hearing at the Milwaukee Journal Building. Mr. Beyer was eventually elected president of the group. The group's mission was to provide a "center for the deafened where social intercourse and opportunity for mutual inspiration and helpfulness may be encouraged and provided, and to be an active instrument of helpfulness to the deafened in every way."

In 1944, the group incorporated and changed its name shortly thereafter to Milwaukee Hearing Society. They offered a hearing aid loan program, classes for school children, and parent education classes. Dedicated staff and other supporters helped the agency grow and expand its programs to include more teachers and therapists.

Decades later the agency changed its name again to the Center for the Deaf of Hard of Hearing. We had one final name change to the Center for Communication, Hearing & Deafness before becoming HEAR Wisconsin late last year. Our mission is to help infants, children, and adults with hearing loss by eliminating communication and language barriers through personalized services, technology, and education. We're excited to build upon our 90 year history and prepare for another nine decades of service to the community.

Congratulations HEAR WI
Celebrating 90 years of service

In loving memory of
Virginia M. Meisser

Hiawatha National Bank

James W. Meisser
President & CEO

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WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

ERIK PINTAR

Introducing a new series from HEAR Wisconsin that lets our clients tell their story.

Erik Pintar, the son of our Board President, Angela Pintar, was a client in our B-3 program.

Erik, our third child, was diagnosed with hearing loss at 13 months of age. As young parents, my husband Frank and I had no idea how to raise a child with hearing loss. Erik's audiologist gave us a card with one name on it: Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

We called and made an appointment to visit with our newly diagnosed son. So many unknowns were ahead of us that as parents we felt overwhelmed, but we drove downtown to observe the toddler communication play group. We were so relieved to see children who were deaf and hard of hearing communicating and playing together. After meeting the teachers and speech-language pathologists, we realized that our amazing journey with HEAR Wisconsin (then known as the Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing) had started.

HEAR Wisconsin staff gave us tools to use at home while we were teaching Erik about his world. Throughout our journey, we were given so much support through parent education, American Sign Language (ASL) classes, toddler communication group, fun family events like visiting the zoo, family picnics, Family Learning Vacation at Lion's Camp, Brewer's games, and the Winter Wonderland party. When the time came, they also gave us guidance to navigate the transition from the Birth-to-Three Program into the public school system.

We learned about developing his Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and felt equipped to advocate for services that he needed to succeed in school, like using an FM system and having a sign language interpreter. Because of the excellent early intervention provided by HEAR Wisconsin, Erik was able to fully experience life as a student in Wauwatosa Public Schools as well as Boy Scouts, sports, and church activities. Erik is graduating from Carnegie Mellon University this spring with honors with degrees in electrical and computer engineering, computer science, and human-computer interaction. He will begin working for Google this fall. My husband and I are so proud of our son not only for his academic accomplishments, but also for becoming a young man of character and integrity.

Thank you HEAR Wisconsin for helping him accomplish his goals.

> "I don't remember feeling like I had a disability growing up. In fact, knowing sign language was like a superpower to me. Sign language helped me communicate in any situation. I also felt special because I used two languages. Even with amplified audio, sometimes the limited frequency range of my hearing loss prevented me from understanding people's speech. But my amazing interpreter always filled in what I missed. I'm glad to say that I am graduating at the top of my class at a top university, and I created a course at my school on American Sign Language that over 120 students have taken. Thanks HEAR Wisconsin for being there during my early years and giving me the tools I needed to succeed."

Each year in Wisconsin, over 125 children are born with hearing loss.

For babies with hearing loss, the first three years of life are critical for auditory, language, and speech development.

With early detection and intervention, these children can perform at language levels consistent with their peers by the time they enter school. Investment in early intervention results in significant savings for families, schools, and communities as these children grow and succeed.

Evidenced-based, family-centered, and culturally competent practices form the foundation of our program. Unbiased information across the continuum of communication options is available to all families. Services are individually designed to support and maximize the effectiveness of the option best suited for each family.

Birth-to-three early intervention services are provided in the natural environment of the home, daycare, or other community setting. In addition, many families and children participate in our Toddler Communication Groups to enhance social skills and interaction with other children and adults.

We also provide communication therapy services via the internet through our ConnectHEAR teleintervention program. This nationally recognized program is designed to reach families who do not have access to certified auditory-verbal professionals in their geographic region.

Our speech and language pathologists and our teachers are passionate about helping parents learn how to encourage their child's development in communication, cognitive, and social skills.

About 500,000 people in Wisconsin experience hearing loss or deafness.

The need for high quality sign language interpreting services is growing across all industries.

CommLink is Wisconsin's most trusted resource for sign language interpreting solutions. Our nationally certified and state licensed interpreters accurately, effectively, and impartially interpret in a wide variety of settings including medical appointments, legal proceedings, business meetings, educational endeavors, presentations, performances, and family gatherings and celebrations.

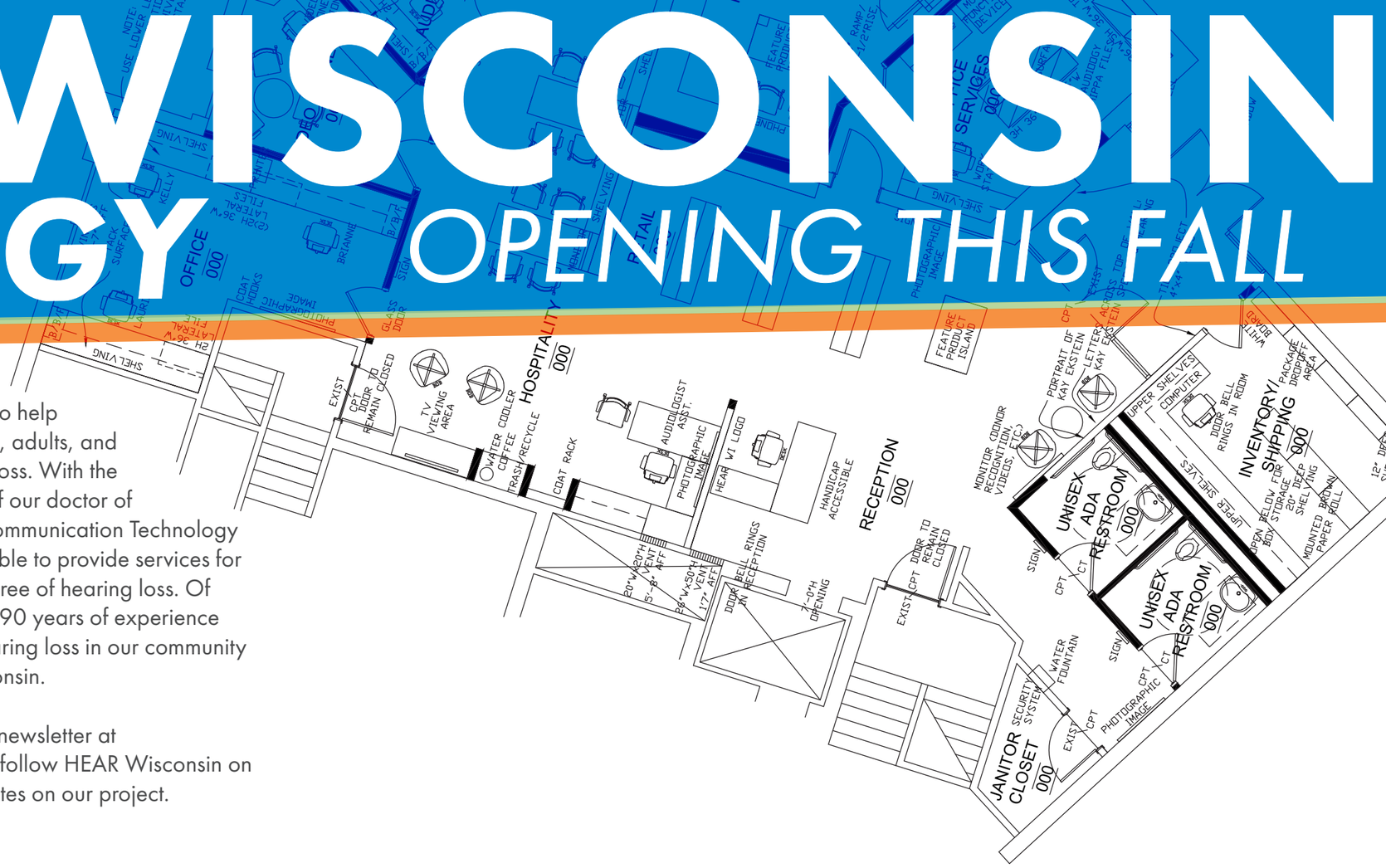
Our dedicated professional interpreters make it possible for both hearing and deaf individuals to participate fully and equally in the conversation.

We are trained and experienced in American Sign Language (ASL), Manually Coded English, Oral Interpreting, Deaf/Relay Interpreting, and Deaf/Blind Interpreting.

LANGUAGE ACCESS SERVICES

COMMLINK
SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETING

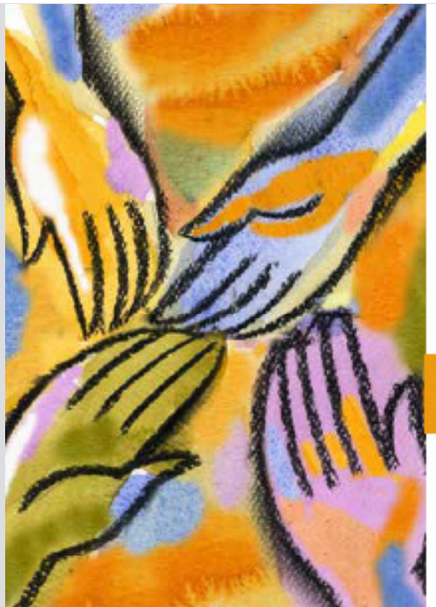
HEAR WISCONSIN AUDIOLOGY OPENING THIS FALL



We are very excited to announce the grand re-opening of our audiology clinic and assistive technology store this fall. Our newly renovated space on our first floor will feature state-of-the-art audiology equipment for hearing assessments, hearing aid fittings, and much more. It will also showcase our wide selection of hearing assistive technology like caption phones, personal sound amplification products, and loop systems.

HEAR Wisconsin Audiology is a unique provider in the audiology market. As a nonprofit organization, we are only interested in helping our clients find the best device for their needs. The proceeds from each purchase are reinvested back into the organization to help support other children, adults, and families with hearing loss. With the combined expertise of our doctor of audiology and our Communication Technology Consultants, we are able to provide services for anyone, with any degree of hearing loss. Of course, we also have 90 years of experience serving those with hearing loss in our community and throughout Wisconsin.

Sign up for our email newsletter at www.hearwi.org and follow HEAR Wisconsin on social media for updates on our project.



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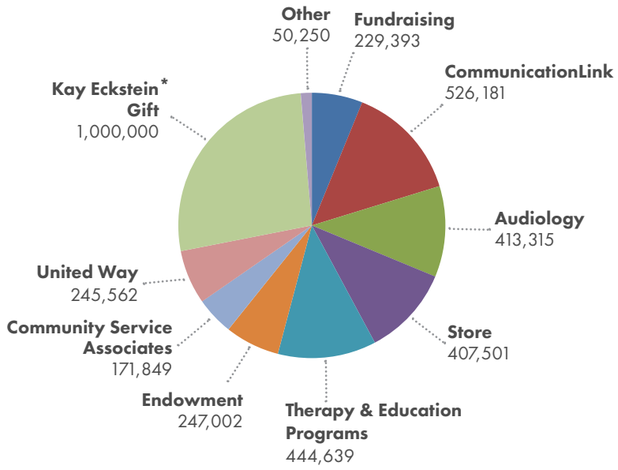
REVENUE & EXPENSES

TOTAL REVENUES

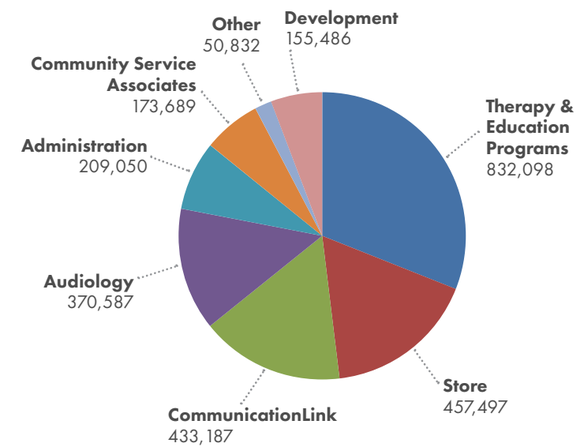
$3,735,692



*Ray & Kay Eckstein made a generous contribution toward our building, which is now called the Kay Eckstein Speech & Hearing Center.

TOTAL EXPENSES

$2,682,426



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HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT HEAR WI

Without you, HEAR Wisconsin could not continue providing critical services to the thousands of children and adults with hearing loss who depend on us each year. HEAR WI is the only organization in Wisconsin that offers comprehensive programs and services to enhance the quality of life of those affected by hearing loss.

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MAIL
HEAR Wisconsin
10243 W National Ave
West Allis, WI 53227

PHONE
414-604-2200

ONLINE
Visit www.hearwi.org

IN-KIND DONATION WISH LIST

Our most pressing needs include:

- Hanna Andersson Pilot Caps for infants and toddlers. These prevent children from pulling off their hearing aids.
- Gently used or like new children's books.
- iPads for our Language Access Services staff to use speech apps during therapy.
- Parking lot repaving.
- Gift cards for school & art supplies for our classroom projects.

WORKPLACE GIVING

Ask your employer about establishing a workplace giving campaign, or, if your organization has one set up, see about directing your contribution to HEAR Wisconsin. If you or your employer are a United Way partner, ask that your support be directed to HEAR WI by adding our organization code (49425) to the United Way donation form.

SPONSOR

HEAR Wisconsin hosts fundraising events and a variety of program events throughout the year. Our fundraisers attract hundreds of professionals and supporters every year - they are a great way for any business, large or small, to showcase their brand while supporting a great cause.

HEAR
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LIVE UNITED
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Greater Milwaukee
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