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HEAR Wisconsin is a nonprofit that helps infants, children, and adults with hearing loss by eliminating communication and language barriers through personalized services, technology, and education.

We strive to help both families and individuals with hearing loss or deafness find the best way to communicate effectively. From early years to golden years and from mild hearing loss to deafness, HEAR Wisconsin offers resources and options - including audiology services, assistive technology, American Sign Language, listening and spoken language, and teletherapy - for everyone.

414-604-2200
info@hearwi.org
www.hearwi.org



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Vouchers Help with Costs for Assistive Technology

If communication is key to living in our fast-paced world, technology can be a lifeline.

- An iPad gives a six-year-old girl unable to speak a way to interact with her family and classmates
- An amplified phone allows a grandmother to hear and converse with her grandchildren
- A PockeTalker enables an elderly woman to feel like part of her assisted living community
- A 21-year-old man orders his own breakfast in a restaurant for the first time with his iPad

HEAR Wisconsin offers the Telecommunications Equipment Purchase Program (TEPP) which helps persons with a hearing, speech, mobility, or vision loss issue to obtain equipment (amplified phones or headsets, PockeTalkers, iPads, hands-free speaker phones, and more) at a greatly reduced price.

The TEPP Program is sponsored by the Wisconsin Universal Service Fund, which was established by the Public Service Commission.

To qualify, participants must:

- Be a Wisconsin resident
- Be a person who is deaf, hard of hearing, speech, mobility or motion impaired
- Be a person who requires special equipment to use a phone in home or when traveling



Voucher amounts vary and depend on disability. There is no age limit but once used, the TEPP voucher recipient must wait three years to reapply for the same disability.

For more information and to find an application contact HEAR Wisconsin:

414-604-2200
www.hearwi.org
hearwistore@hearwi.org



THE DOCTOR IS IN
 HEAR Wisconsin's new audiologist brings his personal experience to the clinic. Read more below.

A STEP IN A NEW DIRECTION
 Adults in our Community Access for the Deaf Program spend day horsing around.

VOUCHERS HELP WITH COSTS FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY
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The Conduit

HEAR Wisconsin's newsletter about our clients, donors, and events.
 In-print and online.



www.hearwi.org | |



The Doctor is In

New Audiologist Brings Personal Experience

Author Mark Twain said, "The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why." For some of us, this discovery can take years. Dr. Nathan Berg, the new audiologist at HEAR Wisconsin, made his discovery because of a childhood illness.

Bacterial meningitis is an inflammation of the membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord. It can be complicated and serious. In about 30% of cases, hearing loss can occur. Berg was in that 30 percent. He ended up with profound hearing loss in one ear and severe high frequency loss in the other.

At first, the diagnosis was difficult. Boyhood dreams about joining the military, entering law enforcement, or becoming a pilot were shattered. But Berg's frequent medical appointments led to a new possibility – working to help people like him.

"I remember being inside a strange, quiet booth alone," Berg said. "My parents and the audiologist were outside. I had to raise my hand when I heard beeps, while the

audiologist pressed buttons on a machine. I was intrigued."

Berg's father, a machinist, hoped for a white-collar future for his son. He encouraged a career that utilized his brains. He valued education and told his boy to work hard and dream big. Elementary and high school behind him, the younger Berg enrolled at Milwaukee Area Technical College and earned an Associate Degree in Liberal Arts. From there he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. In 2007, he walked across the stage at the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a Doctor of Audiology degree in hand.

Today, Berg, 41, is proud to welcome patients and make a positive difference.

"I am excited to be here," Berg said. "This environment is exactly why I went into audiology in the first place."

Dr. Berg lives in Franklin with his wife, Margarita, a Milwaukee Police Officer, their children, Nathan Jr., 4, Alexander, 3, Alejandrina, 1, dog, Suka and two cats, Dinx and Little Gato. Their fourth child is expected in September of this year.

Berg is grateful to have a job he loves and the opportunity to touch lives.

"My grandpa told me, 'you have to play the cards that you are dealt,'" Berg said.

"How you play those cards is up to you."

Schedule your hearing test today. Call 414-604-7219 or visit hearwi.org.

A Step in a New Direction

Stepping Away from City, Adults Spend Day Horsing Around



Pamela waves as Yvette and Lia walk her safely around the indoor arena at Stepping Stone Farms.

As they climbed out of the van onto the gravel driveway at the 28-acre farm in Racine County, the group of six non-hearing, developmentally disabled adults, all members of the Community Access for the Deaf Program at HEAR Wisconsin, sniffed something inherent to country living – horse apples.

The four women and two men (two or three firmly holding their noses) adjusted to the aroma as they shuffled past emerald-crowned ducks paddling in a blue kiddie pool. They smiled at Sparky, the black and white Border Collie. Bees buzzed on yellow wildflowers while the group arranged themselves around two picnic tables. A few feet away, behind a weathered wooden fence, three horses – Nina, a shiny black Tennessee Walker, Silver, a sweet mottled, snowy-gray Arabian and Reggie, a stately red/brown American Quarter Horse – munched hay, watching. It was a balmy 70 degrees under a clear, blue sky.

Stepping Stone Farms holds the usual treasures for city visitors, and, being able to hear is not required.

Led by Passion

Just ask Ruth Stuhr. She is HEAR Wisconsin’s Community

Access for the Deaf (CADP) program coordinator. She’s been doing what she loves for 15 years.

HEAR Wisconsin’s Community Access for the Deaf program supports Deaf and hard of hearing adults with developmental disabilities who may also be medically fragile. The primary program goal is to help them learn to live independently and socialize with peers. Each participant receives an assessment for functional living, communication, and/or speech-language skills. A service team develops goals and writes a plan that may include once-per-week group classes and home visits that may focus on social, recreational, financial and communication skills. Employment assistance is also available. HEAR Wisconsin’s program is the only one in the state that specifically works with Deaf adults with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities.

“Deaf adults often become part of programs for hearing adults, and may struggle to communicate with others,” Stuhr said. “That is why this program is so important.”



Reggie enjoys an afternoon snack while watching visitors at Stepping Stone Farms in Racine County.



The group walks along a grassy path to visit horses at Stepping Stone Farms.

“They can communicate with each other and with us with American Sign Language (ASL). In other programs, that is not possible,” Stuhr added.

One of the most popular group outings is Stepping Stone Farms. Located just off Seven Mile Road in Franksville, Stepping Stone operates as a nonprofit. It is an experiential learning and therapeutic facility, popular with individuals, families, schools, businesses and mental health professionals. The horses are trained to work with disabled adults by equine specialists.

Stuhr and other volunteers look forward to bringing the group to the farm. “This will be our fourth time,” Stuhr said. “The farm has been a real hit. Most of our adults live in the city so they don’t get to see farm life. It has been a real treat for them to get to ride a horse.”

Stirring up Memories

Amy, 35, has been in CADP for ten years. She has autism, is Deaf and developmentally disabled. For her, the farm holds many charms, especially braiding the horse’s hair.

“It is fun,” she said. “And there is so much to do and learn.”

Pamela, 65, joined the group in 2004. She is Deaf, developmentally disabled and has diabetes. She has three

favorite farm activities – braiding the horse mane – like her friend, Amy – and brushing and riding. Many of the adults attend other day programs, but none of the staff know American Sign Language, which makes communication impossible.

“We love it here,” Pamela said. We like being with other Deaf friends and people who sign like us. When we are the only Deaf people, it’s lonely!”

The farm is popular with other groups, too. It is a true teaching facility, according to executive director Lia Sader. “We have helped kids learn to walk, given people back the use of a hand/arm, helped people with autism, and helped kids learn they have value and worth,” she said.

Empathy and Respect Rein

Stepping Stone is home to Nina, Silver, Reggie and more than two dozen other horses, (29 total) all donated or abandoned for one reason or another. Sader, who grew up in the city, has no idea why she loves horses so much.

“Deaf adults often become part of programs for hearing adults, and may struggle to communicate with others,” Stuhr said. “That is why this program is so important.”

“They are as essential to me as breathing,” she said. “And, anyone who comes to the farm sees our imperfect horses and it speaks to them! They may think, ‘OK, maybe life isn’t turning out exactly as planned, but that doesn’t mean you give up! It doesn’t mean good things can’t happen.’”

Each of the six CADP adults took turns brushing Reggie and Nina, and then riding around the indoor area, fully supported by Lia and volunteers Lynn, Mary and Yvette. Before leaving, the group made their way along a grassy path to another pasture to visit some of the other horses. It was a challenge for those with a slower gait, but the smiles indicated it was worth the effort.

“Getting outdoors can be really helpful for people,” Sader said. “Fresh air combined with wide open spaces combined with horses can be therapeutic. The horses are the stars. They don’t judge and that makes people happy.”



HEAR Wisconsin
10243 W National Ave
West Allis, WI 53227

414-604-2200
www.hearwi.org

1st Annual Fall Festival

Saturday
September 22nd

11 AM to 2 PM
at HEAR Wisconsin



RSVP at www.hearwi.org or call 414-604-2200



**Free
Hearing
Screenings!**



**Petting
Zoo!**



**Balloon
Animals!**

A Fall Festival? At HEAR Wisconsin?

Everyone is invited to spend time with the animals, have their faces painted, bounce in the bouncy house, and be dazzled by nimble balloon makers! Come and enjoy grilled food and snacks and learn more about us during quick, informative tours of our state-of-the-art hearing healthcare facility! Discover how HEAR Wisconsin helps anyone with hearing loss eliminate barriers to language and communication!

**TURN
OVER**

See what we were up to earlier this summer!

Get HEAR Wisconsin updates on Facebook, Twitter, and online at www.hearwi.org.

Fire Safety with the Milwaukee Fire Department



Don't forget about our American Sign Language Classes!

- We offer fun, interactive classes in American Sign Language for beginners and advanced signers.
- Classes are taught by experienced teachers who are native ASL signers.
- Kids are welcome in our youth classes.

Go to www.hearwi.org/asl and subscribe with your email address to get the latest news on upcoming classes!