



IN THIS ISSUE...

- 2 Community Outreach
- 4 Funding Update
- 5 Special Events
- 6 Donor Spotlight
- 8 Technology Update



Message from Jill Van Calster, President and CEO

I marvel at the challenging, but positive journeys that the children, adults, and families who visit our organization are taking to improve their communication in a very busy hearing-oriented world. Every day, our exceptional team members strive to help grandparents hear their grandkids again, guide moms and dads in learning how to communicate with their child with hearing loss, and ensure accurate sign language interpreting between businesses and their customers or patients. It is so gratifying to see the powerful impact our services have on them.

We continue to improve efficiency and the efficacy of our organization to keep our overhead low, while maintaining a high level of service to the community. Donors, clients, and supporters like you have helped us serve our clients for over 90 years, and we're excited to work with you to develop innovative services in the future. One exciting outreach initiative we started in January is providing free basic services directly to the residents of Luther Manor, an assisted living facility. Read all about it on the next page!

Thank you so much for giving, using our services, and sharing our mission with others!

Seniors Line Up for Outreach Clinic

Word spread quickly. There were signs in the elevators and flyers at lunch. Residents reminded each other: A doctor of audiology will be available for two hours on Friday in the Sycamore Room.

The people at Luther Manor Terrace, a 29-acre independent senior living community at 92nd and Hampton were abuzz about the new outreach program designed by staff at HEAR Wisconsin.

On the first Friday of every month, from 9 to 11 am, a HEAR Wisconsin audiologist and assistant set up equipment and offer a variety of basic hearing services, free of charge, with a smile. The pilot program's goal is to help eliminate barriers to good communication for the young-at-heart.

"We are excited to offer audiology services to the community as part of our mission to help improve communication and quality of life for the growing older population," said HEAR Wisconsin's President and CEO Jill Van Calster.

"And, anyone who needs more in-depth assessment and/or assistive technology can visit our newly renovated Hearing Healthcare Clinic in West Allis."

The Audiologist and Assistant Are In

On a recent Friday, nearly a dozen men and women came through – some came for wax removal, some for screenings, some for hearing aid cleanings, all interested in maximizing their hearing quality. HEAR Wisconsin staff, Dr. Brooke Lewandowski, a fulltime audiologist from the Medical College of Wisconsin, and Brianna Agee, an audiology assistant, greeted patients.

Doctor Brooke spent time listening to concerns and conducting cleanings/wax removal. It is a job she loves. "HEAR Wisconsin has so much to offer to the community (audiology, our assistive technology store, interpreting services, Birth-to-Three Early Intervention program)," Dr. Lewandowski said. "So many people don't know about us and what we can do to help them improve their quality of life."



Dr. Brooke Lewandowski checks an ear on Luther Manor resident Ron Wells during a recent outreach visit.



Possible hearing aid options are explained to resident Rosie Yaksh.

*"We are proud to serve our community in the most meaningful ways possible. Meeting seniors where they live makes sense."
Jill Van Calster*

Properly working hearing aids are crucial, and the residents kept audiology assistant Brianna Agee busy.

"I change wax guards, ear hooks, tubing, and/or domes," Agee said. "I might sanitize earmolds, vacuum the microphone ports, battery doors and check volume to be sure microphones and/or receivers are in working order."

"This is nice," said. Rosie Yaksh, 88. After a short talk with Dr. Brooke, Yaksh said she is considering hearing aids.

(continued on page 3)

Seniors Line Up for Outreach Clinic (cont.)

“Now I know a little more than I did before.” Yaksh was advised to go to HEAR Wisconsin for a comprehensive audiology test at the West Allis Clinic.

Ron Wells, 89, was happy to see the staff from HEAR Wisconsin. Wells, a retired pediatrician, sees Dr. Brooke as his regular audiologist. “We are delighted they are here,” Wells said. “And, with the cold weather, it is so convenient to be right here in the building!”

Edgar Burhop, 83, came down with his wife, Mary, 82. Mr. Burhop has trouble hearing the TV. He scheduled an

appointment with Dr. Brooke to check both his and his wife’s ears. Mary has Alzheimer’s disease. “It’s good to find out about this,” Burhop said. “In order to make a decision, you need information.”

Making Hearing Health Priority One

HEAR Wisconsin works to eliminate communication and language barriers for anyone with hearing loss. “We are proud to serve our community in the most meaningful ways possible,” said Van Calster. “Meeting seniors where they live makes sense.” Expanding the new outreach service to other assisted living facilities is underway.



CommLink interpreters are available 24/7. They are on call for all situations from special events to emergency care.

Interpreters on the Move

CommLink Sign Language Interpreting Services, a division of HEAR Wisconsin, provides the community with nationally certified and/or state licensed interpreters to help facilitate communication.

You never know where you might find a CommLink Interpreter.

Jim Hagen, manager of CommLink, was scheduled for a two-hour appointment with a deaf client he had worked with for 12 years. Every three or four months or so, Jim accompanied the client on medical or business appointments.

On the day the 80-year-old was having cataract surgery, Jim was there. “This was his first surgery, ever,” Jim said, “and he



was nervous. Anyone would be, but for a deaf person, losing their eyesight, even for a fraction of a second, is extremely hard. His other eye was covered with a patch for the surgery, and my client’s anxiety was understandably high.”

It showed during the patient’s pre-surgery blood pressure check. The numbers were dangerously high, possibly too high to proceed. Jim stood nearby and placed his hand on his client’s shoulder.

“I patted him a bit and this assured him everything was going to be fine,” Jim said. “At that moment, the nurse retook his blood pressure. Amazingly, it was back to normal!” Then the doctor invited Jim into the surgery room and he held his client’s hand. All went well.

“As professional interpreters, we avoid touch, but on this day, it was necessary,” Jim said. “It was another form of communication – a friendly gesture – and it conveyed the comfort he needed.”

In 2017, CommLink interpreters traveled a total of 43,450 miles to more than 160 businesses and organizations for interpreting jobs. That’s like circling the globe, twice!

Our Little and Big Hearts Thank You!

HEAR Wisconsin is extremely grateful to the following for recently supporting our organization:

United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Waukesha County: \$199,510 (for 2017-18)

Oberkotter Foundation: \$150,000 (for 2015-2018)

Potawatomi Hotel & Casino's Heart of Canal Street: \$35,255

Stackner Family Foundation: \$30,000 (for 2017-18)

Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Gertrude M. Speer Fund: \$15,000

Kohls Hometown Giving Program: \$5,000

Elm Grove Junior Guild: \$5,000

PPC Foundation (Pieper Electric/Ideal Mechanical): \$2,500

We thank these grantors for investing in our programs and helping us continue our mission to serve individuals who are d/Deaf or have hearing loss.



Stackner Family Foundation

Elm Grove Junior Guild



Pieper Electric, Inc. & Ideal Mechanical



Potawatomi's Heart of Canal Street Check Presentation Event

CORKS & KEGS

Join us at a new venue for a whole new Corks & Kegs experience in 2018! Enjoy the beautiful riverside patio, great company, a live and silent auction, wine pull, and, of course, delicious food and drinks. Bring your friends and support our programs, while listening to great music and sampling great food.

Have questions or are interested in sponsoring? Send an email to fundraising@hearwi.org or call 414-604-2200.

**Thursday, May 17th
6-9 pm at
Red, White, and Blue
1044 N. Old World 3rd Street**

Register today at hearwi.org

Don't miss out on the exciting silent auction items!

A sampling of the auction items include:

- 2-Hour Sailing Trip
- The Capital Grille Gift Card
- Milwaukee Brewers Tickets
- Aveda / Neroli Salon and Spa Basket
- Honey Pie Cafe Gift Card
- John Hardy Bracelet
- Jordy Nelson Autographed Jersey
- Green Bay Packers Tickets

Get Outside - Walk with Team HEAR Wisconsin!

Walk with us to raise awareness of hearing loss in our community and to help support critical services for children and adults. There will be entertainment for kids, including balloon twisting, caricatures, face painting, sand art and other activities. Complimentary light breakfast and lunch will be provided.

Register today to walk or donate to Team HEAR Wisconsin at hearwi.org/events. If you raise or donate \$50 or more, you will receive a free HEAR Wisconsin t-shirt. Contact Kristin Johnson at kjohnson@hearwi.org for questions.



**Saturday, May 12th
Greenfield Park, Area #3A
2028 S 124th Street
West Allis, WI 53227**

**Registration: 9 am
5K Walk Starts: 10 am**

The Milwaukee Walk4Hearing is one of many Walks being held throughout the country each year and are coordinated by Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA). Additional information about HLAA can be found at www.hearingloss.org



2017 Walk4Hearing

Harnessing the Sweet Sound of Hope

Donor Spotlight: Rita Lewenauer is a dedicated long-time supporter of HEAR Wisconsin. She served several terms on the HEAR Wisconsin Board of Directors and has given generously over the years. This is her story.

In the early 1950s, when technology was still in its infancy, resources for children struggling with hearing loss were not easy to find. With two small sons with hearing loss, Rita Lewenauer was determined to help her children succeed. The young mother started making calls.

"I finally reached someone in the audiology department at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee," Lewenauer said. "And they told me about the Milwaukee Hearing Society."

The Milwaukee Hearing Society had been formed in 1926 as the Milwaukee League of Hearing. The programs and focus evolved, and two-plus decades later, it was still going strong.

Lewenauer went to investigate. The members occupied a rented office on the fourth floor of a building in downtown Milwaukee. Each participant had someone

with hearing loss in their family. The executive director, June Carr, was also an excellent teacher who made a significant difference in their lives," Lewenauer said.

The Lewenaurs got involved. Auditory training provided the parents with new methods to work with their children and they quickly gained confidence from the emotional support.

It changed our lives forever," Lewenauer said. "For example, we learned to turn our heads when talking, so the boys could see us and read our lips. We all became conditioned to the situation and it changed everything."

The Milwaukee Hearing Society continued to grow and

(continued on page 7)

"My life, and that of our sons - now 64 and 68 - would never have been the same without the help we received from HEAR Wisconsin."

Rita Lewenauer



The aptly named "Lewenauer Tower" is just one example of how Rita's support has enriched the services HEAR Wisconsin offers its families.



Children are delighted to go on a "trip" from the classroom to the playground.

Harnessing the Sweet Sound of Hope (cont.)

expand services. Years went by. Through several different names and four locations, the organization evolved into HEAR Wisconsin. Today, the organization owns the building at 10243 W. National Avenue. More than 27 full time employees, 28 freelance interpreters, 75 volunteers, 18 Board Members, and a host of programs for infants to adults with mild to severe hearing loss, are making an impact in Wisconsin.

Supporting the Community

“A conscientious, fiscally-responsible board, devoted staff, and extensive programs with outreach to all, along with the children, parents and grandparents, make HEAR Wisconsin a vital part of our community,” Lewenauer said.

“Early detection and continuing education are the most important factors in enhancing those with hearing loss to live a fuller life,” she said. “Vocabulary building and speech - through auditory training, cochlear implant or sign language - all are available at HEAR Wisconsin.”

In addition to volunteering and previously serving on the board, Lewenauer remains one of HEAR Wisconsin’s most generous supporters. The outdoor play area she donated continues to delight and inspire the children and families who come seeking hope.

“My life, and that of our sons – now 64 and 68 – would never have been the same without the help we received from HEAR Wisconsin,” Lewenauer said.

WAYS TO SUPPORT HEAR WISCONSIN

Individual Giving

Without individual donors like you, we could not continue providing critical services to the thousands of children and adults with hearing loss who depend on us each year. Donate online, by mail, or over the phone.

Planned Giving and Endowment Fund

Create a lasting legacy with a financial donation that will be distributed in the future to HEAR Wisconsin. You can make a planned gift by naming HEAR Wisconsin as a beneficiary of your will, life insurance, or IRA account. Planned gifts and gifts to HEAR Wisconsin's Endowment Fund can result in tax benefits to you. There are also other gift opportunities that can be created through your financial advisor or a foundation such as a charitable remainder trust, charitable gift annuity, or charitable lead trust.

Workplace Giving / Matching Program

Ask your employer about establishing a workplace giving campaign, or, if there is one set up already, see about directing your contribution to HEAR Wisconsin and having your employer match your gift.

Sponsor

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

Smartphone Apps to Try Out

More and more people own smartphones and are downloading apps to use as helpful tools. Check out these apps that may benefit you, your family, friends, or colleagues to ease challenges of communication.

Ava



Live Caption



You can use these apps to caption conversations on a smartphone. Their speech recognition software can caption conversations in real-time.



Tunity's app allows you to scan any muted live TV, allowing you to stream audio directly to your device. Use it to hear any TV in a bar, gym, airport, or waiting room -- tune-in wherever and whenever you want.

Assistive Technology Device to Consider

Have you visited our renovated Hearing Healthcare Center lately to check out the latest assistive technology devices? Our technology consultants are always on the look out for new devices that will help remove or ease the communication barriers between family members, friends, and colleagues. Here is a device to consider:

Ditto



Free yourself from smartphone anxiety! Ditto is a tiny clip that vibrates when you receive an important call, text, or message and is customizable with the free app. You won't be bothered by EVERY SINGLE phone call, text, or email either. Ditto allows you to select your favorite contacts and will only alert you to them.

Ditto is also handy as a timer or wake-up alarm. It comes with a wristband, so you can wear it at night and wake up to vibration without disturbing your partner.



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

HEAR Wisconsin
10243 W National Ave
West Allis, WI 53227

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

Wisconsin's premier resource for hearing and communication for 92 years.



Kay Eckstein Speech & Hearing Center
at HEAR Wisconsin