

CLEARLY SPEAKING

A NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF THE CENTER FOR HEARING & SPEECH

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ERVIN AND ROBERTO SUCCEED AT ST. CECELIA

In 2012, speech-language pathologists from the Center for Hearing & Speech created a therapy program at St. Cecilia School and Academy in the Carondelet neighborhood of St. Louis. The program was based upon a similar pre-literacy language piloted at Hilltop Childhood Development Center from 2010-2013. This program had a successful blueprint already in place to springboard with ease into St. Cecilia's.

The number of children enrolled in this program increased to 14 in the 2014-2015 school year and Center pathologists estimate the number of children enrolled in speech/language therapy in the 2015-2016 school year to remain at 14 children who will require ongoing or new therapy. Students in the program range in ages from five to 10 years. They all reside in St. Louis City and receive financial assistance provided by the Center.

Two of these students are Ervin and Roberto who, at the beginning of last year, struggled to meet any pre-requisite skills for learning to read, write, and spell.

When Ervin first entered the program it was difficult for him to read short words in print and to create new words using a variety of letter combinations. During the



Language-to-Literacy program, he learned to associate written letters to the sounds they produced and increased his reading skills significantly.

Roberto had difficulty perceiving the differences between the ending sounds of words, which made the very important literacy skill of rhyming much more difficult for him. Upon exiting the program he was able to identify the ending sounds of words and create some his own rhyming words.

One of the biggest positive changes for both boys, noted at the end of the school year, was their increase in confidence and their willingness to participate and more challenging academic activities.

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Center for Hearing & Speech improves the quality of life for individuals with hearing and speech disorders by providing caring and high quality services regardless of one's ability to pay, and continually striving to address a greater portion of the unmet need relating to speech and audiology in the St. Louis region.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RITA TINTERA



The hum of lawnmowers and the laughter of children playing are in the air! Yes, summer is upon us, as we begin planning our trips and outings with friends and family, have picnics and cookouts and attend outdoor events. The season is known for a “living easy” mentality, but summer may not be so care-free when you have to deal with difficulties related to a hearing or speaking disorder.

That’s why we kick off our Summer Appeal at this time of year to help cover the cost of therapy for children who may have a speech or language disorder when they attend school this fall. Very soon you will receive in the mail our ask to provide support for little ones like Ervin and Roberto (see cover article) and other children in need who are

given therapy in the comfort and familiarity of their schools.

Your help enables our licensed, professional speech-language pathologists the ability to meet with kids identified with a speech delay, a stuttering problem, an inability to comprehend language or an incapability to speak at all. You have the power to change lives with your donation. Help us ensure you make a difference in the lives of children in need by supporting our Summer Appeal. Ervin’s and Roberto’s situations exemplify how donations make sure these boys receive the help they need to correct their problems so they will have a firm footing on early education to learn, to be able to read and write, to speak clearly and socialize with their peers, teachers and family. Your donation goes far to help little ones every year!

Giving is not specific to any season. The Center continues to grow and change with our times, with the end goal of whatever you give to benefit a multitude of people with their communication disorders. Whatever you give ... time, expertise or financial resources ... thank you for your willingness to help others in need!

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Joe Kilmade, Principal at St. Cecilia’s, is thrilled with the assistance and outcome of the program. “The Center for Hearing & Speech provides critical and timely intervention for students at St. Cecilia. Dozens of students have benefited from a variety of screening and therapy services. This invaluable support empowers students by building confidence and teaching skills necessary to find success inside and outside the classroom. St. Cecilia is grateful for the opportunity to partner with the Center; we hope our relationship continues for many years to come!”

In 2005 St. Cecilia’s was designated the official church for Catholic Hispanics in St. Louis. Because of this large population of Hispanic children in the school, the Center has worked with 10 students in the pre-literacy program that were unable to communicate at an age-appropriate level in either English or Spanish.

The Center looks forward to the upcoming year working with St. Cecilia’s and seeing the great things the program will bring for years to come!

SUMMER IS HERE And so is our Summer Appeal!



Your help during this annual campaign ensures children, such as five-year old Zion, receives the therapy he needs to overcome his stuttering problem.

Zion's condition is like that of many children across the St. Louis area afflicted with

communication disorders. The Center's speech-language pathologists provide in-school therapy for these kids at 12 different partner schools, day-care centers and Head Start programs in our communities where there is the most need. These kids come from low-income families, whose parents or guardians may not have the financial resources to pay for this much-needed therapy that can correct their problems.

Know that your donation is specifically earmarked to fund this therapy for these children as they begin the 2015/2016 school year. Look for our appeal invitation featuring Zion and others in the mail soon; you can also donate online at our website, www.hearing-speechstlouis.org to help these kids attain academic and social success!

EXPANDED SERVICE HOURS AT AFFINIA

Audiology services at Affinia Health Center on Biddle Street in downtown St. Louis have been expanded from one day a week to two days a week, thanks to ongoing support from the Missouri Foundation for Health (MFH) and additional support from the Episcopal Presbyterian Health Trust (EPHT).

Now in the second year of the partnership of providing these services at this federally-qualified health center (formerly known as Grace Hill Murphy-O'Fallon Health Center), Center audiologists now are providing hearing evaluations and fitting hearing aids on Fridays. This extra day is in addition to hours begun in 2013 on Tuesdays.

Friday service means that clients living in north St. Louis City have more access to caring audiologists and state-of-the-art audiology services in a more convenient and timely manner. It's definitely needed since client appointment rosters were



booked for weeks in advance. The extra day will help alleviate an appointment back log.

"We are grateful to the Missouri Foundation for Health and the Episcopal Presbyterian Health Trust that allow us to continue to diagnose and treat hearing loss in the city of St. Louis," said Dr. KB Frazier, the Center's chief audiologist. "These funds make the gift of hearing affordable, thereby enriching our patients' family and work lives."

With the latest EPHT funding, the Center's audiology team can provide this additional day of service for low-income residents throughout 2015. MFH funding for this partnership is pledged through 2017.

VOLUNTEER CORNER **Thank You to Nicole and Sarah**

The Center has said farewell this spring to two volunteers, Nikki Weintge and Sarah Young. Nikki began working at the Center in the Summer of 2014. Nikki began volunteering with us in her final semester at St. Louis Community College after taking speech classes and wanting to further her experience. "I love the opportunities to learn and how much I can take away each day" she said of her time at the Center. Nikki plans to further her studies at Fontbonne University and become a Speech Pathologist.



Nikki

Sarah began her time at the Center in September of 2011 after starting her freshman year at St. Louis University. Hearing and speech were a big part of her life and after recently learning she had mild hearing loss, she looked into the Center at the SLU Service Fair. Sarah graduated from SLU this spring and will soon be leaving the St. Louis area and getting married.



Sarah

The Center thanks both of them for their hours of time given and wishes them the best of luck in their future endeavors.

YOUNG FRIENDS SPRING INTO SUMMER WITH GREAT EVENTS

Young Friends of the Center for Hearing & Speech met on May 26 at the Granite City Brewery in Creve Coeur for the first in the series of Monthly Young Friend-raisers. The members had an evening of "tales and ales" with 20 percent of the proceeds going towards the Center. This was the first in a planned series of monthly events that members can choose to meet at to socialize and raise funds in a dine-to-donate format at varying locations around the St. Louis area.



The Young Friends will also be present to assist on Saturday, July 18, when the Center participates with other area nonprofits to provide health screenings at the 2015 Cardinals Redbird Rookies Heath Fair.

THANKS FOR THE SUPPORT

Children and adults of all ages took advantage of complimentary services offered at the Center's recent Free Clinic Day, held in early May.

In addition to free hearing and vision screenings for kids, parents of children could also get speech/language evaluations for their children, at no cost. Adults of any age could receive a hearing evaluation, on the house, by the Center's doctors of audiology with the assistance of Washington University's Program in Audiology and Communication Sciences students.



Many thanks to Schnucks Markets and Unitron for underwriting supplies and services for children, and to Center Young Friends who volunteered to help that day!

CLIENT HIGHLIGHT **Jeanie: Turning the Volume up on Life**



This past December, Jeanie told her ear, nose and throat doctor that her family and friends were complaining about the loudness of her TV volume. He referred Jeanie to the Center for a hearing evaluation with Dr. David Mason.

Upon examination, Dr. Mason discovered Jeanie had an 80 percent hearing loss in both ears with moderate to moderately-severe sensory-neuro loss from her Meniere's Disease. Meniere's Disease is not a common cause for the majority of Center's hearing loss clients.

Jeanie was approved for financial assistance from the Center, enabling the Center's

Dr. Kate Sinks to fit Jeanie with her first hearing aid just three days before Christmas last year. Jeanie was very excited and emotional about being able to hear her family for the holidays.

"My family was so happy that I was able to hear again. They told me I was more fun!" she laughed. "I could hear and participate in their jokes and we can watch TV again, before I had the volume up to 40, now I am at a 10 and we can all enjoy together!"

Jeanie is delighted with how the hearing aid has improved her communication with others. She is no longer so focused on listening that she misses the content of what others are saying. After asking people to repeat themselves multiple times, she would just pretend to hear what they said, even when she didn't. Before she only focused on the other person's lips as she tried to hear what they were saying, but now "it's a full experience," she explained.

"The hearing aid added volume to my life! I suddenly heard sounds I had been missing for years!" she continued. "Even little sounds you take for granted like the crinkling of paper, the pop of a container lid I unscrew in the morning, the sound of my own footsteps. Before I got my hearing aid, I forgot that I had even heard those sounds before. It took a bit not to get startled when I heard those new sounds again. I realized how loud the door slammed when I thought I was just closing it."

DONATIONS BOOST PROGRAMS

Thanks to support from two local philanthropic organizations, the Center's School Screening and Speech-Language programs have purchased much needed supplies and tools to achieve their goals to provide assistance to children.

The St. Louis Christmas Carols Association recently awarded funds to help the Center purchase an audiometer when conducting hearing screenings for children at their schools. An audiometer allows our program technicians the ability to test middle-ear function

(tympanometry), which looks for fluid behind the eardrum and other medical anomalies.

The Optimists Club of Clayton was also generous to the Center, specifically awarding funds to assist the Speech-Language Program. This support enabled the Center to purchase an electronic tablet loaded with literacy and speech apps for speech/language therapy for children. In addition, the donation also allowed the Center to purchase activity sets, therapy lesson materials and interactive educational tools.

THANK YOU DONORS

Without the kindness and giving spirit of individuals, the philanthropy of foundations and trusts, and community awareness of organizations and companies every day of the year, the Center is able to assist local children and adults to correct their communication disorders and to lead happier, more fulfilled lives.

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NEW BOARDMEMBERS

The Center is pleased to welcome two new board members in 2015. We look forward to the fresh perspectives and ideas they will bring to the organization!



Azra Ahmad practices at Mid-America Law Practice, which she started in 2012. She received her B.A. from Washington University, her M.S. from Ithaca College, and graduated from St. Louis University School of Law.



Gabe Wilson is a Senior Case Manager for the Client Consultation Group at Edward Jones. He has been working in the financial field since 2004 and graduated from the University of Missouri – Columbia.



CENTER WELCOMES MICHELLE FRICKS

Michelle Frick's began working at the Center for Hearing & Speech earlier this year as a member of the Center's speech/pathology staff, but that was not her first encounter with the Center. While still in High School she was involved in a shadow project for a class and observed a pediatric speech therapist session at the Rock Hill clinic, and the moment became a defining one for her future and career.

CENTER FOR HEARING & SPEECH

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Center supporters and donors had a fun evening "Swinging to the Beat for Hearing & Speech" at Hollywood Casino St. Louis in Maryland Heights on March 13!