



WORDS FROM CEO Brett Bachmann



Did you know that 20% of Americans—approximately 48 million people—report some degree of hearing loss? And up to 30 school children per 1,000 could have a hearing loss? As disheartening as these statistics sound, we are making positive strides to ensure our students and patients are able to participate in their communities.

Hearing health solutions, research and child advocacy drive our mission.

Not only do we advocate for the children of our state, our voices resonate across this country. Locally, our teachers are in the classroom each day making a difference in the lives of each and every one of our students and their families. The partnerships we have formed with our community, The Louisville Orchestra and The Louisville Ballet make it possible to provide fundamental and creative avenues for our students to blossom. Miracles are happening each day and it's a joy to watch our children come to life as they are exposed to a wonderful world of education and hearing.

As spring approaches, I'm excited about our creative and cutting-edge initiatives that will help enhance the lives of the deaf and hard of hearing of all ages. I am especially honored to introduce the *Listen Up!* Project – an innovative program that will engage deaf and hard of hearing senior citizens in Louisville in a way that will not only enhance their hearing health, but contribute to the lives of some of our forgotten citizens. You will be as impressed as I was to meet some of the seniors who, despite odds of their own, take time to make a true difference. This program, which kicks off later this month, will highlight what's best in our community. We are proud of our seven years of work with Sisters of Charities and beginning a Teletherapy program at their home in Bardstown, Kentucky. And as usual, we have students from local private and public schools—Assumption, Kentucky Country Day, Christian Academy and others—spend their volunteer hours assisting our teachers in the classrooms.

I'm proud to be at the helm of such innovation and deep sense of compassion to our deaf and hard of hearing community. As things are constantly growing and changing, I am always expanding our reach and challenging the teachers, audiologists and staff to grow even more. I invite you to call our offices to volunteer, or schedule a tour or presentation, for your senior or civic groups.

We invite you to keep an eye on us as we continue to grow up and out into the community, the state and the country!

-Brett

SUPPORT HEUSER DURING THE BRACKETS FOR GOOD!

- We have a tough bracket starting out with tons of other great organizations so we need your help to make it through to the finals! Simply click the link below and let the donating begin!

Every amount helps support our goal!

- \$10-** New book for the library
- \$20-** 3 Packs of hearing aid batteries
- \$50-** Art Therapy for an entire class!
- \$100-** Speech Therapy Session for a child with hearing loss!
- \$150-** A new set of ear molds for a child's hearing aids
- \$200-** Audiology appointment, including assessment of hearing, repair of amplification, and recommendations for classroom



Share the video with everyone who you think would want to make a difference during this March Madness!

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PRESENTING THE LISTEN UP! PROJECT

Every year countless Kentuckians deal with the problems associated with hearing loss and are unable to financially afford the proper care needed to live a normal life. While the new federal health law has provided millions of people with medical coverage, this law does not include aural healthcare. To help fill this void, The Listen Up! Project is creating an opportunity for people to volunteer at various locations around Louisville in exchange for credit towards hearing aids. This community-based solution was started in 2016 from the generous donation by Delta Dental Kentucky's Making Smiles Happen Program. This program allows you or a loved one to volunteer at one of the Heuser Hearing Institute's charitable foundations partners to receive the credit for hearing aids and start the path towards better living.

For more information visit: <http://heuserhearinginstitute.org/listenupproject>.



UNDERSTANDING THE RINGING IN YOUR EARS HHI Clinic

Many people experience a persistent ringing in their ears. This is common, and referred to as Tinnitus, a condition that affects roughly 20% of the American population. Tinnitus is defined as the perception of sound when none is actually occurring. For some it is a minor nuisance but for others, a major impediment to their quality of life.

It is important to note that tinnitus isn't a disease itself, but a symptom. As such, it can occur as the result of a number of conditions. These include hearing loss, noise exposure, head or neck trauma, high blood pressure, vascular disorders, heart conditions, ototoxic medications, benign tumors known as acoustic neuromas, and impacted earwax. Sometimes, the cause is never determined. Individuals most at risk are male, over the age of 40, and smokers.

Tinnitus is most often described as a ringing in the ears, but may also take the form of a buzzing, whooshing, roaring, clicking, hissing or whistling. Some tinnitus sufferers experience severe mental and emotional anguish. Side effects include fatigue, depression, anxiety, irritability, and memory/ concentration problems. There is no cure for tinnitus itself. Unless the underlying condition responsible for symptoms is identified and can be treated, your only real course of action is learning to live with the phantom sounds.

Fortunately, doctors have developed a variety of successful strategies for dealing with tinnitus. The most popular is white noise therapy. This principle uses random sound frequencies distributed throughout the hearing spectrum to disguise the persistent background noises. The patient learns to mask out these sounds. Electronic devices made solely for this purpose exist, though the same effect can be achieved through use of an air conditioner, fan or humidifier. Patients with hearing aids can turn up the volume and drown out the annoying ringing noises associated with tinnitus.

While the majority of people with hearing loss can be helped with hearing devices, for some, even the most advanced and powerful hearing aids are not enough.

If you are experiencing ringing in your ears, contact Heuser Hearing to schedule an appointment with an audiologist at 502.584.3573.

HHLA TEACHER PROFILE Nikki Sipe



Heuser Hearing & Language Academy (HHLA) teacher, Nikki Sipe recently completed her certification as Listening and Spoken Language Specialist (LSLS), Auditory Verbal Educator – the 4th such certified professional of this kind in the entire state of Kentucky and only one in Louisville. Quite the accomplishment!

LSLS certification comes from The Alexander Graham Bell Academy, located in Washington, D.C. The AG Bell Academy is an independently governed subsidiary corporation of The Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Founded in 2005, its mission is to advance listening and talking through standards of excellence and international certification of professionals.

LSLS certified professionals are licensed audiologist, speech-language pathologists or educators of the deaf and hard of hearing who have voluntarily attained a high level of specialty education and experience in listening and spoken language theory and practice. They then turn that knowledge into creating teaching methods that will empower families to be the best advocates of listening and spoken language for their children.

When asked why so few hearing professionals seek this certification, Nikki had lots to say. "There are so few LSLS professionals because we aren't asking enough of our professionals to obtain it! It is a large commitment – financially, mentally and especially the time. As a part of the process, Nikki was observed by an already certified LSLS professional, by multiple LSLS professionals, completed the continuing education requirements, then completed a large cumulative exam that covered nine domains of the Alexander Graham Bell and the listening and spoken language principles.

Nikki has been with Heuser Hearing & Language Academy since 2012 and currently teaches six students in her classroom. A native of Mt. Vernon, Illinois, and a graduate of St. Louis University (BA in Communications Sciences & Disorders/Speech Pathology/Audiology) and a MS (Early Intervention in Deaf Education) from Fontbonne University, in St. Louis, she came to HHLA to be near her sister, a University of Louisville graduate student at the time. "I had heard so much about what a great city Louisville was that I googled "Louisville Deaf" and the school name popped up," says Nikki. "When I called to see if there were any job openings, there were, so I applied and after two weeks, I got the job and I have loved being at HHLA ever since," adds Nikki.

After four years and many challenging, yet curious students later, Nikki has fit in quite well with a teaching style she likes to think of as innovative. She is hoping her LSLS certification will help take her students to the next level. "We have to adjust our education styles to help prepare our students to be successful in all environments," says Nikki. "We all know the sky is the limit for our kiddos with hearing loss; we just need to be ready to help them fly!"

Lyndon Location
417 Benjamin Lane,
Louisville, KY 40222

Dupont Location | 502-584-3573
3900 Dupont Square South, Suite D
Louisville, KY 40207

Downtown Campus
111-117 East Kentucky St.
Louisville, KY 40203