

HEUSER HEARING INSTITUTE

2025–2026 Impact Report



CEO Message

Welcome!

We are very proud to share our 2025–2026 Impact Report with you. Heuser Hearing Institute (HHI) has been giving children and adults across our community access to sound and language for nearly 80 years. Together, we will continue providing award-winning curriculum, therapy and hearing health care to students and patients with hearing loss for many years to come.

We are pleased to announce that we have raised over \$4 million for Building Foundations, Amplifying Futures, our capital campaign to renovate and update the patient care facilities on our Old Louisville campus, which will allow us to serve 30% more children, adults and seniors than we have in the past. Originally established to sustain academic and clinical care for the Heuser Hearing & Language Academy, the HHI clinic today is Kentucky's largest nonprofit pediatric audiology provider, one of the largest cochlear implant service sites and one of the largest Medicaid hearing health care providers. Many are not aware, however, that proceeds from the clinic directly benefit the school. The clinic is the revenue engine for the entire HHI system. Without it, the Heuser Hearing & Language Academy could not provide scholarship-funded tuition and essential services to children diagnosed with hearing loss, nor could we support our various satellite clinic locations throughout the Greater Louisville and Southern Indiana region. Increasing clinical capacity will, in turn, increase funds available to the school.

As you read this report, we hope you'll feel the same sense of pride and excitement that we do in how your investment supports our mission each and every day across the region and the state. Thank you for your continued support and belief in the transformative work of HHI. We couldn't do it without you.

Sincerely,

Brett Bachmann

CEO, Heuser Hearing Institute



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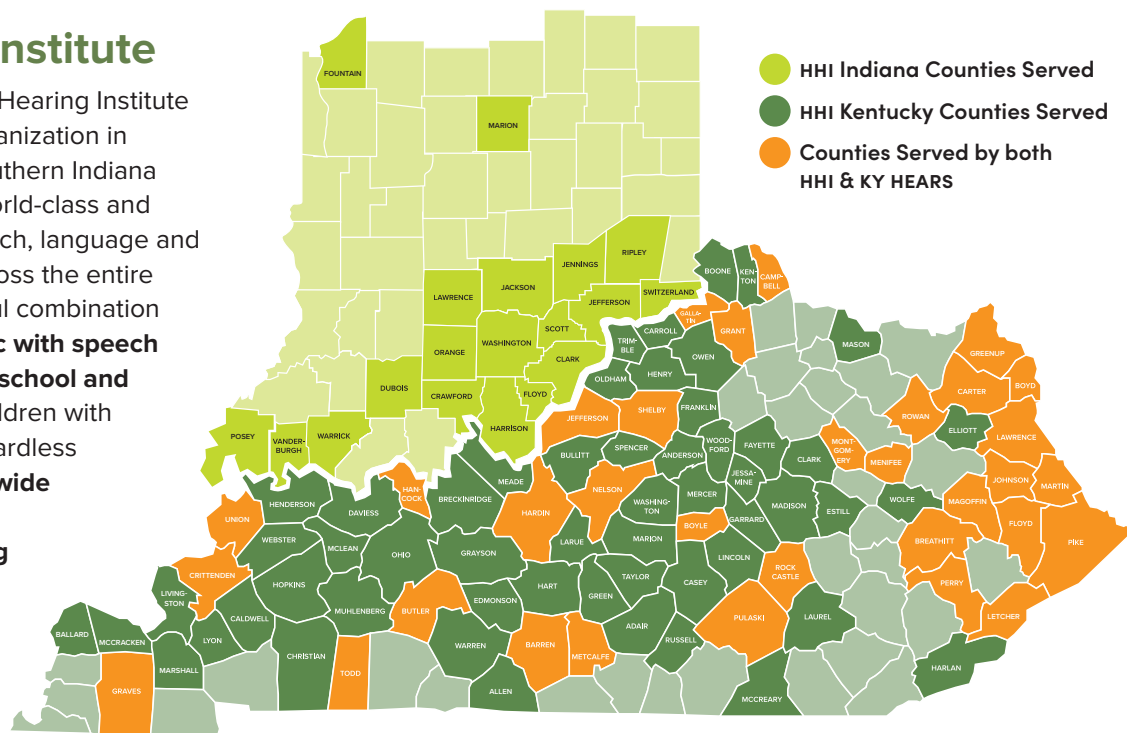
THE IMPACT OF HEARING LOSS

- **705,533 people** in Kentucky experience hearing loss.
- **55% of these deaf individuals are unemployed** and not in the labor force—nearly double the rate of hearing individuals.
- **Kentucky ranks third in the nation per capita for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals**, yet it ranks last in both high school completion and employment for this population.
- Children and adolescents with hearing loss are **25% more likely to experience abuse and neglect**.
- **Untreated hearing loss in adults** is linked to increased risk of falls, dementia and even premature death.
- **Long-term opioid use** has also emerged as a contributor to hearing loss and tinnitus.

Our Work

Heuser Hearing Institute

Founded in 1948, the Heuser Hearing Institute (HHI) is the only nonprofit organization in the Greater Louisville and Southern Indiana region providing access to world-class and comprehensive hearing, speech, language and balance disorder services across the entire lifespan. Through the powerful combination of a **hearing health care clinic with speech and language services, a preschool and kindergarten program** for children with communication disorders regardless of the ability to pay and **statewide access to mobile and permanent hearing screening facilities** through KY HEARS, HHI offers a unique continuum of care for all ages, from diagnosis to treatment and childhood to adulthood.



THE CLINIC

★ **8,638** TOTAL PATIENTS SERVED

★ **17,562** TOTAL VISITS

★ **48%** OF PATIENTS REQUIRE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

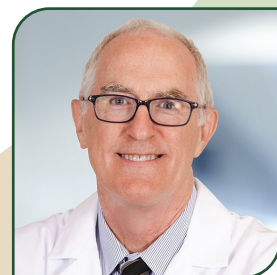
Meet Dr. Robert Dowling

For Dr. Robert Dowling, what began as a sudden episode of dizziness while preparing for surgery in the operating room later became a life-altering vestibular disorder. He struggled with brain fog, headaches, poor sleep and a constant sensation of motion that made it difficult to work, exercise, socialize or enjoy the activities he loved. For months, he felt as though he had just stepped off a spinning merry-go-round.

A colleague referred him to Heuser Hearing Institute, where Dr. Ingrid Edwards guided his care through testing and treatment. When his condition worsened, Dr. Edwards identified the underlying issue and connected him with a surgeon.

Following surgery, Robert regained his health and returned to activities that had once seemed impossible. He slept through the night, recovered his energy and returned to biking, live music, sports and time with family and friends. More than two decades after first coming to Heuser, he continues to travel from Cincinnati for his follow-up care because of the confidence he has in the team that helped restore his quality of life.

"Imagine you are on the worst merry-go-round of your life, you were super, super sick, and you got off of it, and you felt like that for months. That's what it was like. If anyone asks me where to go, I tell them make an appointment, go to Heuser. It may change your life because it changed mine." —Dr. Robert Dowling, Patient



CLINIC SPOTLIGHT

Through funding from the **Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky**, Heuser Hearing Institute provided **502 low-income and uninsured children** with hearing and speech evaluations, along with the follow-up services they needed.



The School

Heuser Hearing & Language Academy

Heuser Hearing & Language Academy (HHLA) is a comprehensive educational community that exists to empower those with hearing loss or speech, language and communication disorders to reach their full potential and participate effectively in the community.

HHLA Highlights

- ★ Established two new neurotypical preschool classrooms, creating additional opportunities for children throughout Louisville while fostering inclusive learning environments
- ★ Maintained HHLA's distinction as a Kentucky All STARS 5-Star Rated Program, demonstrating continued excellence in early childhood education
- ★ Expanded enrichment opportunities through partnerships with the Louisville Ballet, Louisville Orchestra and other community arts organizations, providing students with unique educational experiences

A Full Circle Moment

Recently, Heuser Hearing & Language Academy welcomed two special visitors home. HHLA alumni Linda and Kathy made a surprise visit and shared a treasured gift, a photograph from the Academy's early days when the school was housed at the Woman's Club of Louisville. As they walked through the building together, they paused at the History Wall and discovered their own photographs displayed among the generations of children whose lives have been shaped by Heuser.

Both women are deaf, and both have gone on to lead successful, fulfilling lives. Linda became a teacher, dedicating her career to educating others, while Kathy built a successful career with State Farm. Together, they shared stories of their school days, reminiscing about childhood friends they still keep in touch with and the memories that helped shape who they became.

As they stood in the lobby signing back and forth, something remarkable happened. A current HHLA student, just three years old, stopped in his tracks. He noticed the sign language, his face lit up and he immediately joined the conversation. Excited beyond words, he began signing with Linda and Kathy, thrilled to meet adults who communicated just like he did.

It was a reminder that every child who walks through our doors deserves to know: You can achieve, you can belong and you can become anything you dream of becoming.



ACADEMY SPOTLIGHT

Heuser Hearing & Language Academy was honored to be **one of only 26 organizations selected** for the **Thrive by Five Louisville Pilot**. This recognition strengthens our ability to connect families with high-quality early childhood education and expand access to critical support services in our community.

The Statewide Outreach

Launched in 2022, KY HEARS is a statewide hearing health care initiative designed to increase access to hearing care, especially in rural areas throughout Kentucky. With both mobile and permanent hearing screening facilities, KY HEARS removes barriers to care, helping Kentuckians gain equal access to hearing health care that can improve student education and reduce employment gaps for those with hearing challenges.



Since the launch of KY HEARS:

- ★ **11,439** patients have been tested and screened for hearing loss.
- ★ **33** Kentucky counties have been served through workshops, fairs and hearing clinics.
- ★ Reached more than **40,000** Kentuckians through community education, expanded services and social media engagement.

KY HEARS

Expanding Pediatric Hearing Health Care in Elizabethtown, Kentucky

This fiscal year, KY HEARS welcomed two significant new partners—Hardin County Public Schools and the Lincoln Trails District Health Department—marking a meaningful expansion of the initiative's pediatric reach into Elizabethtown, Kentucky. The partnership reflects KY HEARS' continued mission to remove barriers to hearing health care and deliver early identification services to communities across the Commonwealth.

At the start of 2026, KY HEARS leadership met with Kentucky State Representative Steven Bratcher to explore opportunities for bringing hearing health care services to Hardin County residents. That conversation led to the design of a targeted pilot program at two local elementary schools—a focused entry point for establishing a sustainable pediatric program in the region.

In April 2026, the KY HEARS team conducted hearing screenings for 160 students across the two pilot schools, which provided an immediate, meaningful impact in the community. Building on that success, the program is set to expand significantly in fall 2026, with screenings scheduled at 13 Hardin County schools. The expanded program will serve all kindergarten and third-grade students, as well as any student referred for screening. Students identified with hearing loss will receive follow-up care through KY HEARS.

Early identification of hearing loss is one of the most critical factors in supporting healthy language development and long-term academic success. For school-age children, undetected hearing loss can significantly hinder learning, making community-based screening programs like this one essential. The Hardin County partnership ensures that students who need support are identified early and connected to appropriate care, giving every child the best possible foundation for success.



KY HEARS SPOTLIGHT

KY HEARS set a goal of participating in **60 community outreach events** and exceeded expectations by delivering **119 events this past year**. This expanded outreach allowed us to provide hearing health care education, screenings and resources to thousands of Kentuckians across the Commonwealth.

Together, we can do so much to help children and adults with hearing loss in our community. Your ongoing support gives the gift of sound and language to children and their families. For more information on how your support can help children and adults with hearing or speech challenges, visit www.thehearinginstitute.org or contact Debbie Woods, Director of Development, at dwoods@thehearinginstitute.org or (502) 371-9930.

And ask us about the final phase of **Building Foundations, Amplifying Futures**, our capital campaign to renovate and update the patient care facilities on our Old Louisville campus, which will allow us to serve **30% more children, adults and seniors** than we do today!

Follow us!



(502) 371-9919
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