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INFORMATION FROM
Associated Audiologists, Inc.
"Hearing Your Best for Life"



Hearing Your Best

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"Home on the Range" Has Special Meaning for Chiefs Announcer

There's an iconic pioneer cabin in north central Kansas that symbolizes the romantic Old West for visitors, not only from the United States, but from the world over. That's because it's the cabin where Dr. Brewster M. Higley VI wrote a poem entitled "My Western Home."

While that poem title might not be familiar, the song it inspired, "Home on the Range," likely is, and this is the story of its lasting legacy.

In 1871, Dr. Higley homesteaded the ground where the cabin still stands today. With the help of a few friends, he constructed the cabin on July 4, 1872, then wrote his now-famous work in 1873 on the banks of West Beaver Creek in Smith County, Kan.

After the poem was published in the local papers, Dr. Higley presented it to his friend Dan Kelley, who set it to music and then gave it to John Harlan, the leader of a family band that included Kelley. The song immediately became popular, especially with cowboys riding long distances while driving cattle to market.



Dr. Higley and his family lived in the "Home on the Range" cabin until the early 1880s when they moved to Smith Center, Kan., then to Van Buren, Ark., and then to his final resting place in Shawnee, Okla.

Over the years, the land where the cabin stood was bought and sold until it became the property of Pete and Ellen Rust. The Rusts, who were the great aunt and uncle of Chiefs Play-by-Play Announcer Mitch Holthus, lived on the "Home on the Range" property longer than anyone else in its history and were instrumental in making sure the cabin remain on its original site.



Mitch Holthus,
Chiefs Play-by-Play
Announcer

At one point, the authenticity of the song and its origins were called into question, but once legal proof was established, a bill was introduced in the Kansas Legislature in 1947 establishing "Home on the Range" as the official state song.

In fact, in 2017 a movie titled "Home on the Range" was released, telling the story of the authorship, preservation and legacy of the song and the location where Dr. Higley wrote this "unofficial anthem" to the west.

Preserving the "Home on the Range" Cabin

Following Mrs. Rust's death, the Ellen Rust Living Trust was established. The trust contained a directive to donate the "Home on the Range" site to a private charitable organization, ensuring that the cabin would be maintained on its original site.

The Ellen Rust Living Trust trustees selected The Peoples Heartland Foundation as the 501c3 charitable organization to manage the site. Mitch's father, El Dean Holthus, is a nephew of Ellen Rust. El Dean has been instrumental in preservation and improvement of the cabin site. He

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HEAR HERE

Tim Steele, Ph.D.,
President and CEO

I regularly check online reviews, using them as a guide when making a decision or purchase. It's not the only tool I use to guide me but I find it very helpful. At Associated Audiologists, Inc., we take our online and Google reviews very seriously. In fact, this information, which comes directly from our patients, is individually reviewed and shared.

I am very proud of the Associated Audiologists team as we have accumulated over 1,000 Google reviews since we started formally requesting and tracking them. Our practice averages 4.9 to 5 stars, which is absolutely fantastic!

Obviously, each team member deserves kudos as we celebrate this accomplishment; even more important is how we use this feedback to make progress. My father was an educator and coach. His general philosophy was to look for opportunities to improve every day. This regular focus helps us walk the hard journey toward excellence.

I thank those of you who provide these reviews and feedback. Please know that they help us and others who are making the difficult decision about where to seek quality audiology services. We are grateful for your business and always value your input.

Widex SmartRIC



Widex prescription hearing aids are known for their natural sound quality, and are also highly rated for streaming quality and music listening. Now Widex has introduced its newest prescription hearing aid, the MOMENT SmartRIC (receiver-in-canal). This new device is available in five premium colors, boasts enhanced listening and sound features, and has a next-generation on-the-go charger. Here are some of the SmartRIC's new benefits:

- ▶ **Groundbreaking L-shaped design** that places the microphones at an improved angle to enhance directionality, improving speech understanding in noisy environments.
- ▶ **Dual-microphone direction system** that is placed at an improved angle higher on the ear, helping patients experience the voices and sounds they want to hear.
- ▶ **Newly designed microphone inlets** effectively minimize wind and touch noise, making challenging listening environments more comfortable and natural for wearers.
- ▶ **Shares the same chip platform as its predecessor, Widex MOMENT SHEER**, known for unparalleled processing speeds and a more natural hearing experience that reduces any artificial "tinny" sound.
- ▶ **First-ever portable charging solution**, which holds five extra charges. This device is small enough to fit in a pocket or small purse, features LEDs to inform the user of its charging status and offers patients hassle-free charging on-the-go, plus peace of mind.
- ▶ **Impressive battery life**, boasting up to 37 hours of usage on a single charge.
- ▶ **Compact case can fully recharge the hearing aids in just four hours** or provide an additional eight hours of continuous use with a quick 30-minute charge. It uses a USB-C cable or can be charged on a Qi charger pad.
- ▶ **A new Sound Connect (super-small USB plug-in) also is available.** This tiny device allows for easy Bluetooth audio streaming from a computer/laptop to the wearer's hearing aids. This feature is especially attractive for those who do a lot of work on their computers/laptops, such as online meetings, gaming, etc.

**To learn more about the Widex SmartRIC,
schedule an appointment with your audiologist.**

Associated Audiologists Sponsors Randi Cole



Associated Audiologists is proud to help sponsor Randi Cole, Mrs. Kansas United States 2019, as a contestant in the 2024 Mrs. USA Pageant, Saturday, Aug. 3, at the Scottish Rite Theater in Omaha, Neb.

Randi was diagnosed with sudden sensorineural hearing loss in her left ear in 2016 after having a virus. In April of 2020, in the midst of the pandemic, Randi began experiencing extreme bouts of dizziness, and turned to Danielle Dorner, Au.D., our dizziness and balance specialist, for help.

After Dr. Dorner successfully treated her for benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV), she was ready to give a hearing aid a try and consulted with Dr. Jacobson for help. Though the hearing aid Dr. Jacobson prescribed helped Randi, her hearing loss was so significant that she was eventually fit with a cochlear implant, which she still wears today.

Because of her experience, Randi is making hearing loss her platform and hopes to call attention to it during the Mrs. USA Pageant. We know you join us in wishing Randi the best of luck!

“Home on the Range” *continued from page 1*

continues to serve as a Home on the Range Advisory Board member to protect the legacy of the cabin.

Today, 150 years after the original song was written at the cabin, the structure still stands. Thanks to the tireless efforts of the Rusts, El Dean, and donations, the cabin was restored in 2013.

Surrounded by 240 acres of farmland, as well as a beautiful 55-acre walking trail, the foundation is committed to the perpetual care and maintenance of the cabin, as well as to improving and developing the site for the education and benefit of the public; and as a memorial to Dr. Higley, who built the cabin, and to the Rusts, who saved the cabin.

The cabin is on the National Register of Historic Places and is open daily to visitors from daylight to dark at no charge. Mitch said people come from around the globe to visit the historic site each year.

“The cabin and this song mean so much to so many people,” Mitch said. “Not only is it the state song of Kansas, it was FDR’s favorite song, it’s known as the cowboy’s national anthem, and it symbolizes the Old West for people everywhere.”

Inspired by History

Going forward, Mitch is committed to keeping the historic cabin and his family’s legacy alive for future generations. “Our family is very proud of the fact that the song ‘Home on the Range’ was written in Smith County, roughly 5 miles from where I grew up,” Mitch said.

He lends his support to fundraisers for the foundation, with the goal in mind that one day an amphitheater can be



constructed on the property where “Home on the Range” can be performed by the Kansas City Symphony.

“You can only imagine what playing that song at the site where it was written more than 150 years ago would mean for so many people,” Mitch said.

He also hopes the foundation will be able to host historic re-enactments, including initiatives featuring native American history and the role of the Pawnee tribe in Kansas.

“The Chiefs Kingdom has a very rich native American and Old West culture that we believe we can honor through the cabin and the events we host on the property,” Mitch said. “It’s important that we embrace and preserve our rich heritage for generations to come.”

**Want to learn more about the cabin, “Home on the Range” and the Peoples Heartland Foundation?
Visit www.homeontherangecabin.com.**

What Are Blue Zones and Why Are They Important



Just 100 years ago, it was considered a remarkable milestone for someone to celebrate their 100th birthday. Today, thanks to advancing medical technology and better health care, there are more centenarians than ever. But what's their secret to a long life, and even more important, how can they not just add years to their life, but life to their years?

That's at the heart of what Dan Buettner, founder of the concept of the blue zones, was seeking to define. Thanks to previous research, he knew about 80% of how long the average person lives is dictated by lifestyle and environment. So, in association with National Geographic and with funding from the National Institute on Aging, Buettner and a team of demographers studied census data, identifying five pockets throughout the world where people are living longer lives as verified by a number of measurements. These pockets include:

- ▶ Ikaria, Greece
- ▶ Loma Linda, California
- ▶ Nicoya, Costa Rica
- ▶ Okinawa, Japan
- ▶ Sardinia, Italy

This team of experts then used established methodologies to try to determine why people in these communities had such remarkable longevity. Buettner and the researchers dubbed these "blue zones," and their goal was to identify which lessons or principles could be applied to build healthier communities and to help people everywhere live longer, better lives.

▶ Make Your Own Blue Zones

What the researchers learned is that there are lots of lessons from the blue zones you can incorporate into your

daily routine to help you live a healthier, longer life, no matter where you live. Here are a few:

- ▶ **Eat less.** Americans are known for our high-fat, high-carb diets, which are also generally unhealthy. In blue zones, people only eat until they are 80 percent full and consume lots of fruits, vegetables and beans, and very little meat. By shifting their focus, the "blue zoners" also often reap the benefits of lower weight, less body fat, and less chronic disease.
- ▶ **Move more.** The "blue zoners" don't have memberships at expensive health clubs, or watch 75" flat-screen TVs for hours on end. Instead, they get lots of exercise the old-fashioned way, by incorporating natural movement into their daily routines. So, walk to get the mail or take the stairs—not just once or twice, but every time. And instead of using gadgets to help with household chores, use simple tools to do things yourself, like sweeping, shoveling and raking. By incorporating activity into your routine, you're more likely to stick with it, and to benefit by living longer.
- ▶ **Have faith!** Individuals who live in blue zones typically live in faith-based communities where prayer and worship are part of their lives. Research has shown that it doesn't matter which faith you practice. What's important is that you're part of a faith-based community and that you show up. Do that and it could add up to 7 years to your life!
You're also more likely to live longer if you have a purpose, or personal mission, and you're able to articulate it.
- ▶ **Make a connection.** Diet, exercise and faith all meet at the intersection of social connectedness. By eating

for Our Hearing?

together, exercising and practicing faith as a group, blue zoners enjoy long talks with family and friends over healthy meals. They work with others who follow the same practices and get similar exercise, and they connect with others who practice similar faith traditions.

But most important, all of these activities bring blue zoners together so they can enjoy their senses—touching natural foods as they gather and prepare them for meals, smelling and tasting delicious meals, hearing conversations, music and religious traditions, and seeing friends and family at gatherings.

They don't wear headphones or earbuds or sit in a corner, keeping to themselves. Blue zoners come together so they can get the most out of their daily lives for as long as they live, which is where hearing your best comes in, making it easier to stay connected to what matters most to you.

Overwhelmed?

Admittedly, most Americans have a lot of work to do to live like blue zoners, but Rome wasn't built in a day. Start small. Try picking one thing that blue zoners do and incorporate it into your life. Stick with it until it's second nature.

Need examples? Walk more. Eat less. Connect with a friend or neighbor. It doesn't matter what you do—just pick one thing and do it. It could add years to your life, and life to your years.

To learn more about how you can create your own blue zone and what the world's longest-lived populations do to reach the century mark, watch *Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zones*, on Netflix. If you'd like to learn more, read Dan Buettner's updated book *The Blue Zones Secrets for Living Longer: Lessons From the Healthiest Places on Earth*.

To be sure you hear your best and stay connected, no matter what your age, schedule an appointment with your doctoral-level audiologist.



Associated Audiologists is one of the few audiology practices that accepts insurance as payment. However, this DOES NOT mean that your plan automatically covers our services or the cost of hearing aids. Every plan has different benefits and coverage.

Below are two common questions we encounter when visiting with our patients about insurance. The best way to be sure of what your plan covers is to contact your clinic. Our administrative team is knowledgeable in the many plans we accept, and in the services covered, and can provide you with this information.

Q. My insurance plan says it covers hearing aids. What does that mean?

A. A service that is "covered" by insurance means that we are able to submit the services for consideration of payment. However, it does not mean that the patient will not owe anything for the services.

Q. What is my total out-of-pocket (OOP) cost?

A. Several factors affect the patient's total out-of-pocket (OOP) cost, in addition to the co-pay that many plans have. These include:

- ▶ If the patient has a deductible that is not yet met, that must be met before their insurance plan will pay anything toward any covered service. If the value of the service is less than their remaining deductible, they will owe the full allowed amount.
- ▶ Deductibles can be anywhere from a few hundred to several thousand dollars, especially on a high-deductible plan. Even Medicare/Medicare Advantage plans have deductibles, so just because you have Medicare does not mean you will not owe anything, especially if your deductible has not been met at the beginning of the calendar year.
- ▶ The allowed amount is the amount the insurance company allows us to charge the patient for a specific service. This is typically less than the billed amount.
- ▶ Once the deductible is met, the remaining allowed amount will likely be subject to co-insurance. This is usually something like 20% of the allowed amount, meaning the patient will owe 20% of the allowable and the insurance company will pay 80%.
- ▶ The next tier that some plans have is called out-of-pocket max. This is the point at which insurance will usually cover 100% of the allowed amount on a covered service. Most plans' OOP max is \$3,000-\$5,000, or even higher.

Questions about what your insurance plan covers related to hearing aids or audiology services? Contact your clinic and we'll be glad to check your plan's benefits.

One of the Best!



Congratulations to our Independence Clinic team, including **Travis Hopkins Williams, Au.D.** The clinic was named one of the Best in Eastern Jackson County for 2023 in the Eastern Jackson County Examiner's annual readership poll.

Dr. Hopkins Williams is our full-time audiologist in this clinic and has been there since it opened in 2019.

Congratulations Dr. Dorner



Danielle Dorner, Au.D., Vestibular Audiologist with our practice, has been selected as the Executive Officer of the Kansas Board of Hearing Aid Examiners. This is a part-time position, which will allow Dr. Dorner to continue to see patients.

The Board of Hearing Aid Examiners regulates the licensing of examiners and marketing of hearing aids for the state. Please join us in congratulating Dr. Dorner on her new role!

Congratulations also are in order for Dr. Dorner and her husband on the recent birth of their second child.

Dr. Steele Participates in Community Events



Tim Steele, Ph.D., CEO and President of Associated Audiologists, was nominated by Mike Meyer, a fellow Rotarian and member of The Command and General Staff College Foundation, Inc., to attend the United States Army Command and General Staff College National Security

Roundtable (NSRT) March 4-5 at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The purpose was to provide a forum for CGSC students, future military leaders, faculty and staff to interact with community, business and industry leaders in an academic setting and to learn collaboratively about contemporary national security issues.

Dr. Steele also was a guest speaker at the Memory Matters Annual Symposium held at Meadowlark in Manhattan, Kansas, on Thursday, March 21, as part of the Meadowlark Memory Program. He was one of two special guests presenting that evening. His presentation was titled Memory, Hearing and Living Your Best, with a special focus on the ties between hearing and memory and how untreated hearing loss can negatively affect many aspects of life, including memory, social engagement, cognition, and fall risk.

A Chance to Participate in Cognitive Research

Dr. Steele's co-presenter at this event was Dr. Alyssa M. Lanzi, CCC-SLP, Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication Sciences & Disorders, at the University of Delaware.

Dr. Lanzi shared the opportunity to participate in ongoing research regarding brain health. All of their work is performed remotely via telehealth. If you're interested in learning more or participating, visit: <https://redcap.chrc.udel.edu/redcap/surveys/?s=PMPRHNL3DF8KTXJ4>.

Dr. Jacobson Takes on New Role



Dana Jacobson, Au.D., has taken on a new role within the practice as Director of Practice and Patient Relations. She will continue to manage the Overland Park Clinic.

This new position within the practice encompasses overseeing the patient experience with our practice; organizing philanthropic outreach efforts; directing clinical research; coordinating our clinical precepting program; and managing the audiology assistant program.

Please join us in congratulating Dr. Jacobson on her new position.

Staff Updates

- ▶ **Megan** is new as the front desk administrator at the Eastern Jackson County Clinic.
- ▶ **Meredith** has moved into the new front desk admin position at our Shawnee Mission Clinic as Kacie transitions into an audiology assistant role, also at the Shawnee Mission Clinic.
- ▶ **Chelsea** is the new Leavenworth front desk administrator.
- ▶ **Kelly**, who has been with the Associated Audiologists, Inc., Manhattan Clinic since its opening, 2012, left her position recently. We thank her for her many years of service to our patients. Please join us in wishing Kelly all the best in her future endeavors.



We are on a mission:
To improve lives through
comprehensive audiology care.

Red Scarf Project



Since 2015, our patients and staff have contributed more than 400 hand-made red scarves to the Red Scarf Project, a multi-faceted charity program that benefits foster youth once they “age out” of the system and go to college. The organization accepts donations of hand-knitted or crocheted red scarves, which are given to the college-age students on Valentine’s Day each year.

If you’d like to help out, scarves are due this year by Dec. 1, 2024, and can be dropped off at any of our eight clinics. If you miss the Dec. 1 deadline, don’t worry. We’ll continue to collect scarves throughout the year and will include yours with our next donation.

Associated Audiologists also is assisting with this project by covering the cost of shipping for the scarves. If you would like to help, but do not knit or crochet, you can send notes of encouragement that can be included with the scarves.

Associated Audiologists also has been a sponsor of a local not-for-profit organization called YouthThrive that helps youth who have just aged out of the foster care system in our local communities transition to independent living. The goal is to reduce the associated risk factors that these young people can fall prey to.

For more information, call 913-498-2827. You also can find Red Scarf project details and patterns at: <https://www.fc2success.org/programmentoring-and-support/red-scarf-project/>.

CLINIC CORNER



Many of our patients have switched to rechargeable prescription hearing aids, prompting questions about the best ways to keep these devices functioning optimally. Here are some tips to help you get the best performance out of your rechargeable hearing aids.

- ▶ Charge hearing aids at night when you’re not using them. Make it a practice to put them in the charger when you take them out of your ears before going to bed, and you’ll wake up to fully charged hearing aids every morning.
- ▶ Keep your charger next to the bed. That way when you take your hearing aids out before you go to sleep, the charger can serve as a visual reminder to recharge the devices.
- ▶ Plug the charger directly into a wall socket. Avoid using an extension cord as this could potentially damage the charger.
- ▶ Extreme heat or cold is bad for rechargeable hearing aids; for the best results, keep your charger and your hearing aids in a room between 50° and 90° F.
- ▶ Always be sure the LED lights are on your charger when you place your hearing aids in it.
- ▶ If you forget to recharge your hearing aids, in many cases, a quick 30-minute charge can give you 4 to 6 hours of use.
- ▶ Use a soft tissue to remove any moisture from your charging dock prior to charging. Do not use rubbing alcohol or other chemicals to clean.
- ▶ If you’re taking an international trip or going camping, for example, be sure to take the appropriate adapters and electrical devices with you so you can charge your hearing aids.

Questions about your rechargeable hearing aids? Talk with your audiologist.

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What
Are
Blue Zones?
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Changes for TruHearing Patients

Due to rising operating costs such as rent/staffing, we no longer accept TruHearing (TH) patients at our Shawnee Mission, Overland Park and Prairie Village Clinics.

This change is effective immediately. We will continue to honor TruHearing patients' current service plans at these clinics until expiration.

Associated Audiologists will continue to accept new and existing TruHearing patients at our Kansas City, Mo., Leavenworth, Kan., Lawrence, Kan., Independence, Mo., and Manhattan, Kan., Clinics.

If you are a TruHearing patient and would like to continue to see a member of the Associated Audiologists team, you can schedule an appointment at one of the clinics where we are accepting TruHearing. You also can remain a patient at the clinic where we currently see you and we will attempt to bill your primary health insurance for the testing/appointment. In addition, we offer plan discount options that are comparable to the options available under TruHearing.

If you have TruHearing and have questions about your plan, please contact your clinic location.

