

Hearing Your Best

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INFORMATION FROM

Associated Audiologists, Inc. *"Hearing Your Best for Life"*



Associated Audiologists Helps Diagnose Hearing Loss for Robbi Grogan

Robbi Grogan was fit with her first hearing aid nearly 25 years ago, when she was just 39. "I probably had hearing loss even before that," Robbi says. "My hearing declined quickly, progressing from my right to my left ear.

"Soon, I had a profound loss and was wearing the strongest hearing aids available. Even with them, my hearing was very poor. It was challenging, especially with three young sons who were involved in many activities. Hearing loss affects entire families."

Robbi and her husband, Steve Grogan, former New England Patriots quarterback, were living in Boston, Mass., at the time, but they are originally from Kansas where Steve also was a standout player at Kansas State. In fact, the number he wore for the Wildcats, #11, is the only number retired by the university.

Robbi's audiologist in Boston recommended she see an ear, nose and throat specialist who diagnosed her with hereditary hearing loss. "He said there was nothing that could be done, so I accepted his diagnosis," she says. "Because I struggled so to hear, I began to withdraw from the activities and groups I had always enjoyed. Hearing loss was very, very isolating for me."

Then, Robbi and Steve moved to the Kansas City area to be closer to family in 2007. "I asked my sister, who is a physician, who she would recommend I see for my hearing care, and she suggested Dr. Tim Steele at Associated Audiologists," Robbi says.

Initially, Larry Ruder, who has since retired from the practice, saw Robbi and conducted a complete hearing evaluation, including bone conduction testing. "Larry told me he thought

I might have otosclerosis. He recommended I see Bradley Thedinger, MD, a neurotologist."

Otosclerosis causes an abnormal sponge-like bone growth in the middle ear. This growth prevents the ear bones from vibrating in response to sound waves. These vibrations are necessary in order to hear.

Dr. Thedinger agreed with Larry's assessment, and recommended Robbi have a surgical procedure called a stapedectomy to remove the spongy

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Hearing Your Best



Hear Here...

By Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA, President,
Associated Audiologists, Inc.

I recently had to investigate replacement windows for our home. I wanted to be a well-educated consumer and so I started my "research." Interestingly the recommendations, including those from *Consumer Reports*, reinforced the importance of using trained and certified window installers. They clearly stated that you could buy the "best" windows available, but if installed incorrectly, they might perform poorer than lesser alternatives. This is not too unlike treatment for hearing loss.

The typical advertisements for hearing aids focus on low cost and invisibility, which of course try to "lure" potential patients. There are also retail options available promoting inexpensive hearing aids. Don't be fooled. With any important health care decision, there are several key variables to consider. Taking into account the amount of residual hearing, a hearing device is only as good as the provider who programs it and follows your care.

The best value for hearing aids occurs when you meet several criteria. This includes thorough diagnostic testing, access to a full range of technology, availability of quality brand, verification, high quality service, and most importantly the highest educated and trained audiologists. At Associated Audiologists, Inc., we pride ourselves in providing the best value.

We provide the widest range of manufacturers, price ranges, and cutting-edge technology, in all levels, styles and options. We also accept the most health insurance plans. Our staff follow best practices and we offer same-day services when possible if problems come up. In addition, we are the only private practice in the region with 16 doctoral-level audiologists!

There is a business adage you may have heard before... low price, high quality or outstanding service—pick two. Enough said. We promise to deliver the best value to our patients. That means we aren't the least expensive, but we aren't the most expensive either. We also aren't willing to sacrifice the quality products or level of service we know our patients deserve and expect. We hope you'll agree you've come to the right place.

Thank you for your business.

Red Scarf Project Update

In 2015, Associated Audiologists' patients, along with Terri Phillips, medical transcriptionist and claims assistant, left, and Sarah Mediavilla, Au.D., FAAA, audiologist, right, will be donating hand-knitted or crocheted scarves to the Red Scarf Project.



The Red Scarf Project is a multi-faceted charity program that benefits foster kids 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. They also provide these students with an emergency fund donation program and book money. The project has delivered over 20,000 scarves to foster youth in college and training programs across the U.S. since they began the Valentine Day packages in 2005.

Terri will be collecting red scarves at our Prairie Village Clinic, 7301 Mission Road, Suite 140, Prairie Village, Kan. The practice already has collected 30 scarves. Associated Audiologists also is assisting with this project by covering the cost of shipping for the scarves.

If you knit or crochet, or know someone who does and would like to participate, contact Terri for more information at 913-262-5855.

**You can find project details and patterns at:
[http://www.fc2success.org/
how-you-can-help/red-scarf-project/](http://www.fc2success.org/how-you-can-help/red-scarf-project/).**



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www.facebook.com/hearingyourbest

Kelly Jury and Her Husband Share Passion for History

For as long as she can remember, Kelly Jury, administrative assistant at the Associated Audiologists Manhattan Clinic, has had a passion for history.

So when she met her husband, Scott, a few years ago, she knew she'd met her match. "Scott loves history too," Kelly says. Soon, they were re-enacting pre-1840s life on the Kansas plains, along with their daughter, Ruby. They were even married in character, wearing their buckskins and traditional attire of that time.

Today, they are Four Winds of the Past, living historians who travel and exhibit at area events. Scott's role is as a plainsman, trapper and scout known as Moose. Kelly, who is half Lakota, plays his Lakota wife, Wind Dancer, and their daughter plays the part of a young Swedish girl found abandoned on a trail. They wear period clothing and set up their authentic tipi, where they demonstrate

what life was like for the nation's pioneers. "Scott participates in shooting competitions and I enjoy taking part in cooking demonstrations and contests," Kelly says. Even Ruby gets into the spirit, participating in tomahawk throwing contests. "If I can cook something in my

oven at home, I can cook it over an open fire," Kelly says. "And Scott is a master storyteller. He can really bring history to life!"

When they aren't taking part in living history events, Kelly, Scott and Ruby reside in Wamego, Kan.



Associated Audiologists Sponsors Orchestra on the Oregon Trail

Recently, the Jury family took part in the Orchestra on the Oregon Trail, an all-day experience with music and events for all ages held at Alcove Spring Historic Park, located six miles south of Marysville, Kan. Alcove Spring was the stopping place for many wagon trains that traveled the trail. The Topeka Symphony Orchestra performed an Old West concert complete with musical themes from western movies, the sounds of the pioneer days and songs that highlighted the American spirit.

Dr. Steele is originally from Waterville, Kan., and Associated Audiologists served as a sponsor of the event.



Robbi Grogan *continued from page 1*

growth, and the stapes, which were replaced by metal implants. She had the first surgery in 2009, and the second on her other ear the following year.

To her delight, her hearing greatly improved, and when supplemented by hearing aids, returned to near-normal. "It was like a miracle to me!" Robbi says. "After all these years of struggle, I had my hearing back. I could hear the water running in my bathroom and talk on the phone even without hearing aids. With aids, I was able to participate in conversations at restaurants and enjoy meetings. It brought tears to my eyes."

Today, Robbi wears two small behind-the-ear hearing aids with receivers in the canal that Associated Audiologists prescribed for her. She enjoys socializing

with friends and family, and volunteers with her two therapy dogs, working with patients at Children's Mercy Kansas City, Ozanam Home and Crittenton Center.

"My audiologist worked hard to find the best technology for my hearing loss," she says. "I never would have had the motivation and nerve to adopt, train and volunteer with my dogs if I hadn't been able to hear."

"For anyone struggling with hearing loss, I would definitely recommend you get a second opinion. I have always been treated with respect, compassion and thoroughness at Associated Audiologists. I feel blessed that my hearing is so much better in great part thanks to Associated Audiologists, and I am enjoying my life even more!"

To schedule an evaluation with your audiologist, call the office nearest you.

How to Enhance Your Hearing Aid Experience

By Stacey Baldwin, Au.D., FAAA,
Senior Audiologist and Clinical Systems Manager

Hearing assistive technology, devices that supplement hearing and hearing aids, have been around for years, but are constantly improving. We now have specialized devices that can take incoming sounds from a spouse, friend, television, phone, or sound system, and wirelessly send the original sound to your hearing aids so it can be maximized for speech understanding according to your degree of hearing loss.

These devices connect a transmitter, such as a microphone, to the sound source. The sound is then wirelessly sent to a receiver in your hearing aids, which can detect the sound and apply your hearing aid settings based on your specific hearing loss.

One of the benefits to this type of technology is that it helps overcome negative factors that reduce speech understanding, such as background noise, poor acoustics or distance. Many of these devices are designed for individual users, but larger scale

systems also are available for public venues, such as theaters or churches.

In addition to devices that enhance what you hear through your hearing aids, there are also devices such as captioned phones and cell phone applications that will caption your phone calls, typing the sound into text. This technology allows the use of your vision to complement your hearing, just as in face-to-face communications.

New cell phone apps such as the Widex Com-Dex, ReSound Smart App and ReSound Relief Tinnitus App also are available. Several apps let you control your hearing aids from your cell phone, adjusting volume and microphone directionality.

The ReSound Relief Tinnitus App creates soundscapes to help mask/cover tinnitus. The sounds can be played from your phone's speaker, or directly through your hearing aids.

At Associated Audiologists, we strive to provide solutions for your individual needs.

If you have a situation that leaves you in need of additional hearing or communication assistance, please talk with one of our audiologists to learn more about these exciting new and improved technologies.



**Hear Your Best
This Holiday Season!**

10% off

all Dex and Unite
accessories including:

- **Cell Phone Streamers** – Widex Com-Dex, Widex UniDex, Widex Call Dex, Resound Phone Clip+
- **Phones** – Widex Phone Dex
- **Captioned Phones** – Caption Call
- **TV Streamers** – Widex TV Dex, Resound TV Streamer 2
- **Remote/spouse Mic** – ReSound Mini Mic

* One coupon per person.
Offer good through Dec. 31, 2015.



Urgent Ear Update

We know you rely on your hearing aids to hear and communicate, which is why we understand the importance of a timely resolution if a problem should arise.

If this happens, our goal is to help you the same day whenever possible. That's why we have revised our Urgent Ear services to make same-day care available at our clinics.

Before dropping your hearing aids off, please call the clinic where we normally see you to check the availability of our audiologists. At that time, a member of our staff can provide you with more information about where to bring your hearing aids for service, and when you might expect the repairs to be completed. Depending on the nature of the problem, repairs required, and warranty status, a nominal fee may apply.

Hearing Versus Understanding: Why it Matters

A common symptom of hearing loss is hearing, but not understanding. Understanding speech clearly, or accurately perceiving words, is a much more complicated process than hearing or detecting a sound. Just hearing a sound doesn't always mean it will be understood. Although to understand the sound, we must first be able to hear it.

By Lisa Battani, Au.D., FAAA, Hearing Aid Program Director



Hearing or perceiving a sound usually is accomplished with little effort, while understanding a speech sound requires attention and processing. This can be very complex. The speech sound is sent through the middle ear, inner ear, and auditory nerve to the brain. Then, the brain must turn the sounds into meaningful language. A disruption anywhere along that path can diminish the ability to understand.

Even people with “normal” hearing may have difficulty understanding speech at times. This may occur if the listening situation is too difficult, we are focused on other tasks, or our brain is unable to assign meaning to the sounds we hear (for example, a language we don't speak). These difficulties can increase with age, hearing loss, and/or when there is too much ambient background noise (think about the last time you went to a noisy restaurant for dinner).

When your audiologist performs a hearing evaluation, they will assess both your ability to hear and understand. First, the audiologist assesses the softest volume at which you hear sounds in each ear. Then the audiologist evaluates your ability to recognize words presented

at a comfortable volume in an ideal situation (a soundproof room).

Even in ideal conditions, sounds may be difficult to understand due to hearing loss caused by inner ear damage or difficulty processing sound by the brain. When someone has a hearing loss, it is important to recognize these issues to establish realistic expectations and recommend appropriate amplification options (hearing aids).

Not all hearing aids are equal!

The new Widex Unique hearing aid line, as well as Dream, are examples of high-end hearing aid technology that may be significantly more sophisticated than a comparably priced product from another manufacturer. At Associated Audiologists, we tailor our hearing aid technology recommendations to best suit your individual needs.

The processors in some hearing aids are designed to improve your ability to pull speech from a noisy situation. This does not mean background noise will be completely suppressed. How much you benefit from hearing aids depends on several factors, including your residual hearing ability, the

listening environment, your hearing aid technology, and how that technology is functioning.

How much you wear your hearing aids on a regular basis also may affect your benefit in complex environments. You will understand speech in more complicated situations if you wear your hearing aids every day.

At Associated Audiologists, we use verification measures to ensure your hearing aids are optimally fit and programmed. Verification enables us to calibrate your hearing aids to maximize not just hearing, but also understanding. We also work with the leading technology to be sure we are offering our patients the best available hearing aid technology. One thing is clear—you will never understand what you don't hear!



**To be sure you are hearing your best, talk with your audiologist.
It may be time to have an updated hearing evaluation, discussion about new technology,
or further evaluate your current hearing aids.**

STAFF NEWS

Practice Awards Student Scholarships



Associated Audiologists, Inc. was a proud sponsor of two student scholarships as a part of the Kansas Speech and Hearing Association Audiology Student Research program. The two recipients this year were **Megan Ellwood**, Wichita State University, and **Aryn Kamerer**, the University of Kansas Medical Center. Shown with the recipients are **Sam Gillespie, Au.D., FAAA**, Senior Audiologist from our Manhattan Clinic, and **Sam Bittel, Au.D., FAAA**, our Vestibular Program Director. Congratulations Megan and Aryn!

Dr. Bittel Publishes Paper

Sam Bittel, Au.D., FAAA, Vestibular Program Director, recently authored the article, "What Audiologists Need to Know about Superior Canal Dehiscence Syndrome," for *Audiology Practices*, a professional journal. Dr. Bittel is active in several regional and national professional associations and is involved with the University of Kansas Medical Center as an adjunct assistant professor in the neurology and audiology departments. He teaches the doctoral audiology vestibular course, and lectures to neurology residents and fellows on electrophysiology and vestibular evaluation/treatment.



Lisa Caravello Joins Leavenworth Clinic

Lisa Caravello, Associated Audiologists Practice Development Coordinator, has joined our Leavenworth Clinic, assisting **Lindsey Pacey, Au.D., FAAA**, with the clinic's patients. Previously, Lisa was based in our Overland Park Clinic. In addition to working in the Leavenworth Clinic, she will continue her role as practice development manager.

Dr. Jacobson Appointed to Board

Dana Jacobson, Au.D., FAAA, Overland Park Clinic Manager, has been appointed by Kansas Governor Sam Brownback to serve a three-year term with the Kansas Board of Examiners in Fitting and Dispensing of Hearing Instruments. This board oversees licensure and consumer protection regarding fitting and dispensing of hearing instruments in the state of Kansas.



Dr. Bittel Welcomes New Family Member

Congratulations to **Dr. Sam Bittel** and his wife, Brennan, on the birth of Sylvia Grace Bittel, born Monday, Oct. 19, and weighing 7 pounds. She joins big brother Grey.



Dr. Ring and Family Relocate

Traci Ring, Au.D., FAAA, and her family are relocating to the Boston area. Dr. Ring has been with Associated Audiologists since 1998 and has worked in our Overland Park, Olathe and Shawnee Mission clinics. She has been an integral part of our practice, and we know our patients will miss her outstanding care and expertise. We wish the Ring family all the best!



Expanding Services

Northland Celebrates First Anniversary

Our Northland Clinic, located in the Embassy Park Professional Building at 8350 N. St. Clair Avenue, Suite 175, recently celebrated its one-year anniversary, and is off to a great start! **Lainey Lake, Au.D., FAAA**, is our audiologist dedicated to serving our Northland patients.



She has now been joined by **Danielle Dorner, Au.D., FAAA**, who specializes in caring for our dizziness and balance patients. Dr. Dorner will see patients in the Northland Clinic once each week. She also sees dizziness and balance patients at our Overland Park and Shawnee Mission Clinics.



A Hearing Aid Unique to You

Unique, a new line of hearing aids from Widex, is groundbreaking technology. These highly sophisticated hearing aids, including Dream, deliver high-resolution sound to the listener. Unique uses an expanded dynamic range, meaning it's easier for you to focus on speech and understanding. The hearing aid produces better sound quality, and it performs better in noisy environments, including wind.

In fact, Dr. Steele says Unique has nine different environmental settings, such as quiet, quiet with speech, transport (the car), and transport with speech, among others. Unique's program determines which environment you are in, then uses those calculations to automatically adjust your hearing aid to the appropriate setting.

"This is very exciting technology for our patients," Dr. Steele says. "The processing chip is more powerful, but it is much more efficient, preserving hearing aid battery life."

**To find out more about
Widex Unique or Dream technology,
talk with your audiologist.**

CLINIC CORNER

Question:

What are bone conduction headphones?

Answer:

Recent developments in the use of bone conduction headphones are allowing people to listen to their favorite music or book on tape without blocking their natural hearing. These headphones replace standard headphones/earbuds and can plug into any MP3, iPod, iPhone or other listening device.

They can allow runners to safely hear environmental sounds around them while running to their favorite music. Or they can allow a hearing aid user to listen to a book on tape while keeping their hearing aids in so they can hear their spouse when they ask them a question. If you have small ear canals, which make earbuds difficult to use, bone conduction headphones may help.

Bone conduction headphones work by placing a small transmitter on a bone, such as your mastoid bone just behind your ear. The transmitter vibrates to the sounds being played. Those vibrations are picked up by the bone and conducted to your inner ear so you can hear the sounds. Because individuals with hearing loss most commonly have inner ear damage, bone conduction headphones may not work well if you have moderate to profound hearing loss.

These headphones can be hard-wired and plug into your MP3 player, iPhone or iPod. Some have wireless features such as Bluetooth, which also can detect the sound from your player, keeping wires from getting in your way. There are also alternatives available for individuals who use hearing aids to conveniently hear music or sound from radios, cell phones, MP3, or iPod/iPad.

**Make sure to visit with your audiologist
about all the options that could help you.**

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Important
information
about hearing
and balance
health from your
audiologist.

Hearing Your Best



Save Money Now on Year-End Medical Expenses

Consider these three questions related to your 2015 medical expenses:

- 1 Do you have a flexible spending account (FSA) and if so, do you still have funds left in it?
- 2 Have you already met this year's deductible for your insurance plan?
- 3 Do you have enough medical expenses in 2015 to qualify for a tax deduction?

If you schedule a hearing evaluation before the end of 2015, you may be able to use dollars you have left in your FSA to purchase hearing aids, as well as take advantage of insurance deductibles. Keep in mind hearing aids usually qualify as medical expenses if you itemize deductions or have an FSA.

We can confirm any insurance plan coverage and work with most health insurance plans.

Schedule an appointment with your audiologist today as end-of-year appointments fill quickly.