

INFORMATION FROM

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

PRACTICE PROVIDES IMPORTANT DONATION TO Operation Breakthrough

Operation Breakthrough cares for more than 400 children each weekday, ages 6 weeks to 13 years. They provide a safe, loving and educational environment for children living in poverty while empowering their families through advocacy, emergency aid and education.

More than 87 percent of the enrolled families live below the federal poverty guidelines, and about 20 percent of the children are homeless or near homeless.

So when Associated Audiologists was approached about the need for Operation Breakthrough to acquire Distortion Product Otoacoustic Emission screening equipment (DPOAE), Dr. Steele and his team began working with the organization to help make this possible.

"This equipment is used to screen the hearing of the children enrolled in Operation Breakthrough and is a

service necessary for their function as a Head Start program," explained Dana Jacobson, Au.D., FAAA, Overland Park Clinic Manager, who coordinated the project. "DPOAE equipment presents sound to the ear and then measures sound that is echoed back from a normal functioning ear. Ears with hearing loss or middle ear fluid will not generate this echo."

Dr. Jacobson worked directly with Operation Breakthrough and an equipment vendor to select appropriate equipment. The practice funded the purchase, along with another private donor who knows Dr. Steele.

"I have been familiar with the work

of Operation Breakthrough for many years and felt strongly about helping them provide this important service to their children," Dr. Steele says.

"We are so touched that Associated Audiologists wants our children to have the best possible care at Operation Breakthrough," says Mary Esselman, CEO. "By making this equipment available to them, the practice is giving at-risk children access to treatment for hearing loss. Detecting hearing issues early in their lives ensures they will have every chance to grow and develop to their highest potential. We can't thank Associated Audiologists enough!"

For more information about Operation Breakthrough, visit www.operationbreakthrough.org.



Hearing Your Best



Hear Here...

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

Recently, my mom found a new optometrist because she felt her previous provider's clinic was dirty and unkempt. When I asked her more about this, she lamented concern that if this was how he kept his clinic, she wondered about the other aspects of her care and service.

I agree with her, and take those concerns seriously. At Associated Audiologists, we have had many clinic-related projects during the past eight months, all with our patients in mind. We remodeled space in our Manhattan Clinic, cleaned carpets at all locations, re-painted and re-carpeted at Prairie Village, and we are moving into a new space at our Leavenworth location, just down the hallway.

Though I must admit it's a tiring process, it's been a great opportunity for some good old-fashioned spring cleaning and honestly, it feels good to get things freshened up. We take pride in the condition and appearance of our clinics and just as my mom pointed out, my goal is for each of our clinics to reflect our deeper pursuit of excellence on behalf of our patients.

More Changes in Store

Just as we see the changes in the landscape as spring approaches, the seasons of time bring people in and out of our lives. And, along with the physical changes at our clinics, we're also experiencing some changes in staff.

Our audiology externs are moving into new positions as they pursue their new profession; new externs will soon begin; we are saying goodbye to Dr. Gillespie at our Manhattan clinic; and we are welcoming Sarah Schotte to this position with the completion of her externship with the practice. These changes bring many different emotions, but I've come to recognize them as necessary in life and health care. Just the like the old saying, the only constant is change.

One thing that won't change though is our commitment to our patients and their loved ones. It's our pleasure to serve you and I can personally attest to the fact that we strive to fulfill our mission to improve lives through comprehensive audiology care. I also hope the next time you see your audiologist, you are welcomed at one of our freshly cleaned and/or remodeled clinics!

Dr. Schotte Joins Manhattan Clinic

After serving the Manhattan community since 2012, Sam Gillespie, Au.D., FAAA, left Associated Audiologists at the end of April, relocating to Omaha, Neb., to be closer to family.

"It's very hard to see Dr. Gillespie leave," says Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA, President, Associated Audiologists. "However, I completely support his decision and I'm grateful for the outstanding service he has provided since completing his externship with Associated Audiologists, and opening our Manhattan clinic. I know he'll go on to accomplish great things."

Stepping in to care for patients in our Manhattan Clinic is Sarah Schotte, Au.D. Dr. Schotte is highly qualified, having received her doctorate of audiology from Wichita



**"I really enjoy working
with a practice that
cares so much about
our patients."**

— Sarah Schotte, Au.D.

State University, Wichita, Kan., and her bachelor's degree from Kansas State University, Manhattan.

Dr. Schotte performed her clinical externship with Associated Audiologists.

Dr. Schotte also will continue to see patients at Nemaha Valley Community Hospital, Morris County Hospital Clinic, and Washington County Hospital.

Originally from Topeka, Kan., Dr. Schotte is excited to join the practice. "I really enjoy working with a practice that cares so much about our patients," Dr. Schotte says. "My goal is to continue to serve our patients' audiology needs and grow the Associated Audiologists Manhattan Clinic."

Dr. Schotte and her husband, Preston, who is from Hanover, reside in Manhattan where they enjoy spending time with family, and cheering on the Wildcats.

"I hope you will join me in wishing Dr. Gillespie all the best, and I invite you to stop by and meet Dr. Schotte," says Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA, President, Associated Audiologists. "She is an outstanding audiologist and professional who is excited to get acquainted and continue to help our patients hear their best."

**To schedule an appointment with Dr. Schotte
in our Manhattan Clinic, call 785-539-7361.**

PATIENT TESTIMONIAL

Dr. Nissen Helps Local Restaurateur Hear His Best!



As the owner of the North Kansas City landmark, Chappell's Restaurant and Sports Museum, Jim Chappell, 74, has spent more than 30 years in one of the toughest listening environments there is.

So, when he began having problems hearing his customers in his late 50s, he purchased hearing aids from another practice.

"Those hearing aids just made everything louder, but I didn't hear any better," Jim says. "It just wasn't a successful experience."

After Jim returned those hearing aids, his hearing continued to deteriorate. "It was probably from listening to too much loud music when I was younger," he says.

A few years went by, then one of Jim's customers shared his experience

with Associated Audiologists, and recommended Jim see David Nissen, Au.D., FAAA, Prairie Village Clinic manager, for help.

"I live north of the river and Dr. Nissen is in Prairie Village," Jim says. "It's a bit of a drive, but it's worth it!" As an aside, Associated Audiologists now has a Northland Clinic, giving Jim another option for his hearing care.

Now an Associated Audiologists patient for nearly a decade, Dr. Nissen recently fit Jim with his second pair of Widex digital hearing aids, and today he says he's hearing better than ever!

"These hearing aids communicate with one another and help me hear better in loud environments, like the restaurant," he says. "I also purchased the TV-DEX, which sends the sound from the TV directly to my hearing aids. That's been wonderful! I don't have to constantly ask my wife, 'What'd they say?' when we're watching a movie."

And, he knows he can count on Dr. Nissen and the Associated Audiologists team to look after his best interests when it comes to his hearing.

"David is a great guy," he says. "He's very knowledgeable and easy to work with. He provides me with the facts I need to make my own decisions. I've had a very successful experience with Associated Audiologists."

Start Knitting!

Associated Audiologists' patients, along with Sarah Mediavilla, Au.D., FAAA, audiologist, and Terri Phillips, medical transcriptionist and claims assistant, again will be donating hand-knitted or crocheted scarves to the Red Scarf Project this coming year, so start knitting now!

The Red Scarf Project is a multi-faceted charity program that benefits foster children 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.



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 913-403-0018.

You can find project details and patterns at: <http://www.fc2success.org/how-you-can-help/red-scarf-project/>.

Hearing Your Best

Here are some clues that you may have a hearing loss, or if you have hearing aids, that you need to schedule an appointment for a check-up:

- You have problems hearing certain high frequencies, such as the high-pitched soft speech sounds of "t," "f," and "s."
- You have difficulty following conversations in noisy environments, like restaurants or crowded rooms.
- You feel people mumble or fail to speak clearly.
- You have problems hearing the television or radio, and others tell you the volume is too loud.
- You have ringing in your ears.
- Your difficulty hearing interferes with your family, work or social life.



Better Hearing and Speech Month

May is Better Hearing and Speech month, a time to bring awareness to the issue of hearing loss.

A new analysis from the Centers for Disease Control suggests at least 10 million (6 percent) adults in the U.S. under age 70—and perhaps as many as 40 million adults total (24 percent)—may have noise-induced hearing loss based on their hearing test results.

The study also found 19 percent of young adults aged 20 to 29 had hearing loss in one or both ears. This finding reinforces the fact that young adults also need to be aware of the risk of hearing loss from loud noise.

A person with noise-induced hearing loss may find it hard to understand speech in noisy environments, such as restaurants. The results of a hearing test appear as a dip on an audiogram (a chart that shows how well a person can hear) in the frequency area where we perceive high pitches.

If you have experienced any of the symptoms listed to the left, you

may have noise-induced hearing loss. A diagnostic hearing evaluation, which includes the type of audiogram used in the research conducted by the CDC, is the best way to determine the type and degree of hearing loss you may have.

Associated Audiologists uses the latest technology to diagnose hearing loss. The audiogram results provide the road map necessary to determine the best way to treat your hearing loss, usually with hearing aids. Hearing protection for those still exposed to damaging sound levels is also important.

And, to be certain the hearing aids prescribed help you hear your best, Associated Audiologists uses real-ear verification with Verifit technology. Few professionals utilize this important technology to check that the patient's hearing aids are programmed correctly and performing optimally.

Celebrating 20 Years!



Congratulations to Tanja on celebrating 20 years with Associated Audiologists!

Tanja has worked as administrative staff in several of our clinics, including at Shawnee Mission Medical Center and originally in Olathe. Currently, she assists our patients at our Overland Park Clinic.

Schedule an appointment for a diagnostic hearing evaluation with a doctoral-level audiologist to find out if you are hearing your best.

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

COM-DEX Remote Mic



Communicating with family and friends in complex environments where there is background noise or you cannot clearly see the speaker's face can be difficult, even for those without hearing loss. Until recently, we haven't had a good solution for our patients in these challenging environments.

Thankfully, a new remote mic from Widex is helping our patients with hearing loss communicate more effectively with their partners. The COM-DEX Remote Mic works with the COM-DEX wireless Bluetooth accessory to improve hearing in difficult listening situations and at a distance.

Here's how it works. The individual with hearing loss wears the COM-DEX wireless Bluetooth accessory around their neck. The conversation partner simply clicks the discreet remote mic onto their clothing, or places it on a table. The mic has a 30-foot range and works best when the COM-DEX and mic are within sight of one another. The COM-DEX also can be used to stream calls and music.

The COM-DEX Remote Mic:

- Helps in one-to-one conversations in difficult listening environments.
- Improves signal-to-noise ratio.
- Minimizes loss of details at a distance.
- Easy and direct connectivity to COM-DEX.
- Easily adjusts via the COM-DEX app.
- The mic can be clipped on or placed on a table for convenience.

Both units are required for the COM-DEX remote mic to work. If you already own the COM-DEX streamer, you will only need to purchase the remote mic.

Talk with your audiologist to determine if the COM-DEX Remote Mic could help you communicate better with your conversation partner.

Widex BEYOND

If your hearing aids are four years old or older, there's never been a better time to upgrade to the latest hearing aid technology available—Widex BEYOND.

BEYOND makes it possible to hear and understand better on the phone, enjoy conversations in restaurants and in the car, and enjoy listening to the television. In short, our patients who have tried BEYOND say their listening experience is better than ever!

Here are just a few features of the new Widex BEYOND hearing system:

- Connects directly to your Android or iPhone® through a customizable app.
- Processes 600 million calculations per second, the fastest digital processor on the market.
- Revolutionary in the way it captures, purifies, and processes more of the sounds in all your dynamic listening environments.
- Automatically adapts to any listening situation, no matter how complex.

Schedule an appointment with one of our doctoral-level audiologists today to see if you could benefit from this groundbreaking technology.



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New Tinnitus Management Technology Now Available

Associated Audiologists is excited to announce that we are the exclusive providers in the greater Kansas City area for a new tinnitus management technology called Levo. Susan Smittkamp, Au.D., Ph.D., FAAA, tinnitus and sound sensitivity specialist, is fitting this new technology.

Levo recently received approval from the FDA as a medical device for tinnitus treatment and relief. The Levo system is a personalized, neuroscience-based sound therapy. Leveraging the brain's natural cognitive abilities, Levo identifies and maps an individual's unique sound print using custom-fit ear buds and proprietary software on an Apple platform.

With their unique sound print identified and mapped, patients listen nightly to a customized therapy while sleeping using the Levo System. The ability to track progress over time and personalize therapy is embedded into the system.

A peer-reviewed study published in the International Journal Of Audiology found a 62 percent reduction in perceived sound among patients in the study.

Note: Health insurance does not cover the cost of Levo, but it does qualify as a medical device, and can be paid for with FSA or HSA funds. Due to the FDA classification of this device, sales tax will apply at the time of purchase.

For more information about Levo, contact Dr. Smittkamp at our Shawnee Mission Clinic, 913-403-0018.

Hearing Your Best

How You Can Help a Loved One Hear Their Best

By Dana Jacobson, Au.D., FAAA,
Overland Park Clinic Manager

Hearing aid technology has advanced a great deal in the last 10 years, but hearing aids remain exactly what they are called, "aids" for hearing.



They can't replace the normal hearing ear, an eloquent and miraculous body system. Ultimately, a hearing impairment affects all the people involved in a conversation and each person should do something to help alleviate the effects.

As loved ones of a person with hearing impairment, our empathy and understanding is critical. We can help those we love "hear their best" by understanding that each individual hearing loss is unique and that every person, hearing loss and hearing aid has limitations.

Hearing aids are unable to overcome poor communication skills and can only help so much in background noise. Working to speak clearly ensures that a hearing aid can capture and amplify all you say, while speaking face-to-face allows visual cues to fill in things your loved one may not be able to hear and ensures you have their attention focused on listening. When in background noise, help your loved one find a quiet corner, or choose a restaurant with less noise to contend with. This supports them remaining part of the conversation and creates a better environment for the hearing aids.

When it comes to an individual's hearing loss, they may suffer from decreased clarity or distortion of the sounds they do hear. This makes speech understanding more difficult than it would be for an individual whose clarity is unaffected. These people may need spouses or family to repeat what was said more often. Consider rephrasing what you said instead of repeating it verbatim. This gives more context to what you are trying to convey. You can also speak at a slower rate, giving the brain time to process what is being said and fill in any information their ears were unable to understand.

Avoid getting angry or frustrated. This adds tension and can make hearing even more difficult. Remember that you are a critical part in the conversation, and each of you is doing the best that you can.

**For more help communicating with
your family and friends, talk with your audiologist.**

STAFF NEWS

Dr. Steele Joins ADA Board

Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA, President, Associated Audiologists, has been invited to serve on the national board of directors of the Academy of Doctors of Audiology (ADA). In this position, he will work with other audiology leaders to provide leadership and direction to the organization and profession.

Congratulations to Our Externs!

Congratulations to our externs, **Katie Petrosky, Au.D.**, and **Jake Nuffer, Au.D.**, on earning their doctorates in audiology. Katie graduated from



Katie Petrosky



Jake Nuffer

Washington University, St. Louis, Mo., and Jake from Missouri State University, Springfield, Mo. Both performed their clinical externships with Associated Audiologists where they gained practical experience working with our team of audiologists learning about evaluating hearing loss, hearing aid technologies, tinnitus and dizziness/balance disorders. We wish them both the best in their careers as audiologists.

Prairie Village Clinic Gets a "Lift!"

Our **Prairie Village Clinic** recently received a facelift, including new carpet and paint. Be sure to stop by and check out our new look!



DCCF Leader Retires

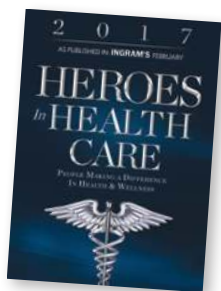
Recently, Sandra Kelly, who has been the executive director of the Deaf Cultural Center Foundation for the past nine years, retired from the organization.

Under her leadership, the DCCF nurtured the establishment of exhibits within the Marra Museum and cemented the DCCF as an attraction for visitors locally and worldwide. The DCCF will search for her successor in 2018. The entire staff at Associated Audiologists would like to extend our deepest appreciation and regards to Sandra for the amazing work she's provided during her tenure, and wish her the best in the next phase of her life's journey.

Congratulations Dr. Steele!

Our Hero in Healthcare!

Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA, President, Associated Audiologists, was recently selected to the 2017 class of *Ingram's Magazine's Heroes in Healthcare* in the professional staff category.



Dr. Steele was among an esteemed group of 21 individuals from the greater Kansas City area honored for their contributions to the community in the February 2017 issue of *Ingram's*.

In addition to being featured in the magazine, he also was honored, along with his fellow nominees, at a special celebration at the Downtown Marriott Hotel.

Under Dr. Steele's leadership, Associated Audiologists has grown to include the largest staff of doctoral-level audiologists in the Midwest, providing comprehensive care for patients with hearing loss, dizziness and tinnitus at six independent, locally owned clinics.

Our doctoral-level audiologists are involved in the community through local organizations, volunteering services for non-profit clinics and serving on medical missions.



Find us on facebook.
www.facebook.com/hearingyourbest

CLINIC CORNER

By Dana Jacobson, Au.D., FAAA,
Overland Park Clinic Manager

Question:

Is there any way I can hear better in a restaurant?

Answer:

Dining in a restaurant can be difficult for people who have hearing loss, even when they use hearing aids. Restaurants can be complicated listening environments, but you can make several choices to help you hear your best.

- 1 When you're in a restaurant ask for a booth in the corner or at least away from the kitchen or band. This helps move you away from the noise.
- 2 Consider sitting in the seat that faces away from the dining room. When digital hearing aids find themselves in noise they will focus forward. If you are looking at all the other tables and patrons, your hearing aids will be forced to pick them up.
- 3 Eating out slightly before or after the dinner and lunch rushes will significantly reduce the background noise generated by a full restaurant.
- 4 Finally, ask around and read online reviews for restaurants. You can't be the only patron hoping for some nice quiet conversation. Someone may have some great suggestions for the perfect spot.

Hearing Your Best is published regularly by Associated Audiologists, Inc. All materials are created by our audiologists solely for the education of our patients and referring physicians. Any reproduction must be approved in writing by our editor. © 2017 by Associated Audiologists, Inc. If you have comments or suggestions, please direct them to:

Editor: Tim Steele, Ph.D., FAAA

Contributors: David Nissen, Stacey Baldwin, Dana Jacobson, Susan Smittkamp, Linda Erickson, Sarah Jo Mediavilla, Travis Hopkins Williams, Lisa Battani, Lindsey Pacey, Danielle Dorner and David Paul, all Fellows of the American Academy of Audiology.

Northland
8350 N. St. Clair Ave.,
Suite 175
Kansas City, MO
64151
816-442-7831

Overland Park
12541 Foster St.,
Suite 220
Overland Park, KS
66213
913-498-2827

Prairie Village
7301 Mission Rd.,
Suite 140
Prairie Village, KS
66208
913-262-5855

Shawnee Mission
8800 W. 75th St.,
Suite 101
Shawnee Mission, KS
66204
913-403-0018

Leavenworth
1001 Sixth Ave.,
Suite 105
Leavenworth, KS
66048
913-682-1870

Manhattan
1133 College Ave.,
Building A, Suite 101A
Manhattan, KS
66502
785-539-7361

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Hearing Your Best for Life

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Hearing Your Best

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Former "Tonight Show" Bandleader **Doc Severinsen** with the **Kansas City Symphony**

Thursday, June 8, 2017 at 7 p.m.

Helzberg Hall, Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts

Celebrate Doc Severinsen's 90th birthday in this tour-de-force concert. Doc pays tribute to the American Songbook and Big Band eras, while sharing favorite stories of his incredible 70-year career. Doc's masterful trumpet playing and connection to the music makes this an evening to remember.

Tickets available at www.kcsymphony.org.