

WINTER 2014

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If you would like to receive newsletters, reminder cards, or appointment reminders sent to you via email, please send an email to the Hearing Resources office at either one of these addresses:

marie@entcentergr.com

jill@entcentergr.com

You can also use either of these email addresses to order batteries for your hearing aids!

Celebration Time!

HEARING RESOURCES MARKS ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY!

With the arrival of Thanksgiving we at Hearing Resources have many things for which to be grateful. Among the most important things is the fact that this month we celebrate 25 years of providing the greater Grand Rapids community with hearing health services. We are truly thankful for all the patients we have had the privilege to serve over these momentous years.

Hearing Resources began in November of 1989 as a one-person operation headed by Susan Haveman-Kruef who was, at that time, affiliated with the ENT office of Doctors Ringenberg, Ortwig and Petroelje. Although that office is now headed by Doctors Kosta, Sprik and Winkle, and is called ENT Center, one constant has remained during this quarter century of time — Hearing Resources.

Hearing Resources started as an adjunct to the ENT services provided by the early ENT office. In 1981 Susan was doing routine audiologic diagnostics for the trio of busy ear surgeons. After several years of providing these services, she dreamed of broadening her work to include providing hearing aid services.

At that time the doctors referred all hearing aid candidates to other audiology centers. Because her background included evaluating and prescribing hearing aids to infants through adults, Susan stopped dreaming and put together a comprehensive plan that would enable her to offer this background as an additional service to the practice.

Her plan included everything from deciding on what additional equipment would be needed, which manufacturers to work with, fees that would be charged, scheduling, obtaining the appropriate licensure and selecting the name Hearing Resources. From day one the priority for her business was to provide the best patient care with compassion and integrity.

“I clearly remember serving my first patient in November of 1989 and ending my first month with an \$18.00 profit,” said Susan during

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Holiday Office Hours

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27: CLOSED to attend Thanksgiving services, eat Turkey, watch the Lions win (hopefully) and -- if you must -- get a head start on your Christmas shopping!

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 28: CLOSED for sleeping in late, eating leftovers, going to see the Nutcracker with the kids.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24: OPEN 8:30 AM UNTIL NOON then hurry to pick up one last-minute present, wrap gifts, bake pies, stuff stockings, and then off to midnight services.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25: CLOSED (OF COURSE) to celebrate Christmas with family, open presents, sing carols, and eat a festive meal.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26: CLOSED for a continuation of the holidays -- and hitting the mall for gift returns and great sales!

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 31: OPEN FROM 8:30 UNTIL 2 PM and then rushing home to prepare for a New Year's Eve party!

THURSDAY, JANUARY 1: CLOSED for recovery sleep-in, Rose Parade, and umpteen football games!

A Healthful Reminder to those with



Health Savings Accounts, Pre-Tax Medical Funds or Insurance Benefits

Each year we beat the drum loudly as a reminder to those patients who have programs that provide them with tax-saving benefits for the purchase of personal health care items and services. Since we're now in the last two months of the year it becomes important to tally up your reserve funds and take advantage of the tax benefits they may provide.

If you plan to spend any of these funds on your hearing health, now is the time to call for an appointment at Hearing Resources before the December 31st deadline. Just call 575-1213 and Marie or Jill will be happy to schedule an appointment for any hearing service requirement you may have.

Celebration Time! ...continued from page 1

a recent interview. "I was excited and proud of my new venture into the hearing aid business!" "Those days it was a one-woman show — receptionist, audiologist, product education, ordering, patient fitting, follow-up, repairs — you name it, I did it!"

Over the years Hearing Resources has become a growing, profitable enterprise and a division of the ENT Center with facilities at both the Kenmoor and Byron Center ENT offices. Susan is still heading up the operation and is ably assisted by two full-time audiologists, Robyn Strangways-Pokorny and Allison Pelton, along with part-time audiologist Cecelia Schmidt. Assisting in the front office at the Kenmoor location, and doing a great job of problem-solving, are Marie Sikkema and Jill McDermid: assisting patients at the Byron Center office are Sue Snyder and Blanca Hulsebus.

"I am so proud of our staff — they truly care about every individual patient and they come to work with a smile and can-do attitude every day," Susan commented.

Susan also reflected on changes in the products — the resources she handles — over the years. "Things are far better for hearing aid patients now than they were 25 years ago," she

commented. "Back then hearing aids were all analog, large — and still a bit unsightly as they protruded from the ear canal."

"Contrast that with today's miniature-sized models, some of which fit totally within the ear canal, and most of which can hardly be noticed as one is wearing them. They are all digital now and have more computer power built into those little shells than some of the early personal computer models of the past. Most of today's hearing aids have Bluetooth wireless connectivity to various devices such as cell phones, televisions and iPads. Technology has come a long way and it is truly amazing to see the advances that have been made — and continue to be made — in the models we fit on our patients today!"

"Don't get me wrong," she continued. "Hearing aids — no matter how advanced and technically superior — can never totally replace the natural hearing you were born with. But we seem to get closer every year!"

"So how do you celebrate 25 years of successful business?" Susan was asked. "By continuing to provide the best patient care with compassion and integrity," she responded. "That was my plan when we began and it remains my objective for the future success of Hearing Resources."

What's New?

BY: ROBYN STRANGWAYS-POKORNY

Hearing aid technology continues to advance and there are some amazing things happening, not only improving hearing aids, but utilizing other devices to help you hear better. The Resound LinX and the Starkey Halo hearing aids can directly connect with Apple iPhones, iPads, and iPad mini generation 5 or higher. You can stream your phone conversations, music, movies, and videos directly into both ears without the need to wear any other device. With a free app your phone can also act as a remote control for your hearing aids, making changing volume or programs just a touch away. They even have a GPS locator that will help you find your hearing aids in case they are ever misplaced. Another option can adjust the base and treble to help you optimize your hearing in every situation. Your phone can even be turned into a microphone using a program called "live listen". By pointing your phone or sliding it closer to the person you want to hear you will be able to better pick up their voice in very noisy environments such as restaurants. This iPhone app also goes over helpful tips for cleaning and caring for your hearing aids.

If you don't have an iPhone or iPad you can still benefit from the advanced technology in the hearing aids and can stream phone conversations into your hearing aids with the use of a phone clip as long as your cellular phone is Bluetooth compatible. If you would like to learn more or have a demo please contact us and we would be happy to assist you.

As you already know, Robyn now works 4 days per week and divides her time between the Kenmoor and Byron Center offices. She loves having that extra day at home with the family which includes her husband Dan as well as Wyatt who is 3 years old and Rory who is almost one year. They all had a great time trick or treating this year.



Why are hearing aids expensive? Good question!

First, hearing aid manufacturers annually spend a large amount of money on research and development. They have several audiologists and engineers of various types working on projects all the time. Therefore, research and development, customer sales and service, in-house and field training, marketing, government regulation specialists to comply with FDA regulations and manufacturing require a substantial number of employees.

Second, a manufacturer can develop the most technologically advanced hearing aid, yet the hearing aid industry, as a whole, sells less than 3 million aids per year. In

contrast, a company that develops an amazing cell phone can sell 150 million units per year. Obviously, with that number of units sold, the price can be less, but the profit will be larger. It all has a lot to do with the economics of market size and demand. Now there are over 30 million hearing impaired persons in the United States however, for a variety of reasons many people will not purchase hearing aids. Unfortunately, many people have apprehension and denial surrounding the idea of hearing loss and hearing aids.

Third, testing, programming, hearing health care, hearing aid maintenance, as well as hearing

aids themselves, require a lot more patient follow-up for a number of years after the initial purchase. The expense of this long term, professional service also affects the overall pricing.

Fourth, the advent of digital hearing aids has definitely raised costs but the benefits have been unprecedented. As someone who has been in the field for over thirty years, I can tell you these new hearing aids do things I never dreamed of when I got out of graduate school. The advantages just keep coming.

-S.H.K

[...more questions on page 4](#)

Hearing Resources

A Division of Ear Nose & Throat Center

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Questions & Answers

Q My hearing aids are no longer under warranty and I am worried about losing them. What can I do?

A Some manufacturers offer warranty extensions once the original warranty runs out. You can call our office to check on the cost. Many home owners insurance policies will also cover loss and damage if you call your agent and have the aids listed on your policy as a rider. You would have to check to see if your policy covers replacement costs in full or if there is a deductible or depreciation clause.

Q Does Medicare cover the cost of hearing aids?

A Medicare most often covers the cost of a hearing test when done at a participating office like Hearing Resources. Some Medicare plans offer money toward the cost of the aids themselves. It is usually around \$350. We are happy to check on your insurance benefits any time if you have questions.



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