

**THE UNIVERSITY
OF ARIZONA
HEARING CLINIC**

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Living Well with Hearing Loss

VOLUME 2 SPRING 2012



Words from our Supporters

I noticed my husband, Jim, not hearing well when he was in his forties. It shouldn't have surprised me, as hearing loss in middle age was very common in his family. His mother, two aunts and his grandfather lost most of their hearing in their early forties. At first Jim chose not to recognize the loss, complaining about my soft tone, loud restaurants, and mumbling voices. Within a few years, he was having his hearing tested and agreed to wear one hearing aid.

Jim had a very active business career and needed all of his senses to make crucial decisions. He has a great deal of confidence which made facing his hearing loss easier. At 68, he is now being fitted for his fifth set of hearing aids and is always researching the latest aid that might make his communication easier.

Living with someone with a hearing loss certainly has its frustrations. My frustrations are usually tied to what I perceive to be Jim's anxieties. However, together we have made behavioral changes to address my frustrations and his anxieties. For instance, I worry that Jim will withdraw from social situations, as it

becomes too exhausting to carry on meaningful conversations in large groups. One solution is to suggest to friends that we have small parties of 6 to 8 in quiet places.



Left to Right: Cheryl Tomoeda, Dyan & Jim Pignatelli, and Dr. Fran Harris

Jim always selects his seat first, usually in a corner away from other tables. I try to help him by "cueing him in" when the subject of the conversation has changed, as Jim sometimes has difficulty following those transitions. Jim has become very upfront with people, explaining immediately that he has a hearing loss and the need to look at them when they talk.

I do worry that Jim will not always hear accurate information and have found that he

relies more and more on the written word. Thank goodness for Blackberries and iPads! He always uses the speaker feature on telephones to amplify sound and prefers, if possible, to have meetings "face to face".

Watching movies is a favorite pastime of mine, and I found we were attending fewer movies because Jim could not follow the dialogue. We now watch many movies at home, and always use the close captioning feature on the DVDs. Jim tries to get a hearing assistive device when attending the theater. We have built a new home recently and have "looped" most of the rooms. Jim can now hear the TV and sound system by adjusting the T-coil on his hearing aid. I believe movies, TV and theater are

"Together we have made behavioral changes to address my frustrations and his anxieties"

informative and connect you to our ever-changing world, so I encourage Jim to participate as much as possible. I would be less than honest if I did not sometimes voice my irritation when I have to repeat myself several times before my message is heard.

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Newsletter funded in part by:
James S. and Dyan Pignatelli/
Unisource Clinical Program for
Audiologic Rehabilitation in Adults

Key Note from Dr. Harris

Since our first newsletter in 2011, our program has continued to expand and improve - and the Living WELL with Hearing Loss groups are at its core. At the close of spring semester, 2012, close to 420 people had gone through this process, gaining knowledge and skills to cope more effectively with the daily challenges of hearing loss.

In our current newsletter, you will read about the progress of our outreach efforts in the Tucson community, about Hear@Tucson for younger adults and about the research results that are emerging from all of the components of the program. Evaluating outcomes is an essential aspect of the program because it allows us to demonstrate to others how such a program can be implemented. It's

exciting to see how much has been accomplished in only three years. This has all been made possible because of the sponsorship of Jim and Dyan Pignatelli, the Unisource Corporation and those of you who have made individual and organizational contributions to the program. Of course, we could not exist without the Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences and the UA Hearing Clinic. On a personal note, I would like to congratulate and thank the many student clinicians, both graduate and undergraduate, who have worked so hard to make these programs successful. Their creativity and enthusiasm constantly move the program forward, and we are very lucky to have each of them at the University of Arizona. We hope that you will appreciate the newsletter, maybe see

some familiar faces, and that your lives continue to go along well as you remember important information and try to use communication strategies - Walk Before You Talk, give good feedback and most of all, RELAX and remember, habits take time to change.

All the best,
Fran Harris, Program chair and coordinator, and the Living Well with Hearing Loss (LWHL) student assistants.



A Student's Perspective

Our program gives students the unique opportunity to get involved in teaching and aiding in the *Living Well with Hearing Loss* groups. We interviewed one of the students about his experience during the spring, 2012 semester.

Student Name:
Andrew "Andy" Golboro

Degrees completed: B.A. in Hearing and Speech Sciences

Degrees currently working on: Doctor of Audiology (AuD)

Clinical areas of interest: Auditory Processing, OAE suppression, vestibular testing



Above: Andrew "Andy" Golboro

What was your involvement in LWHL this semester?

I co-taught four LWHL groups

What did you enjoy about your experience overall?

What I probably enjoyed the most was the face-to-face interaction with the people in group. As a first year graduate student my interaction with people who suffer from hearing loss is limited. LWHL gave me an opportunity to see first-hand how hearing loss affects peoples' lives and reminded me why I'm in this program.

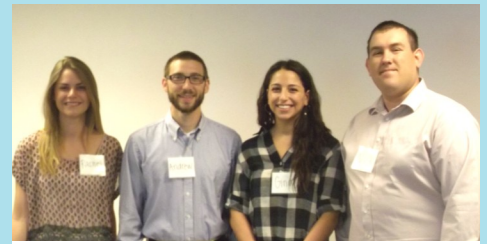
What was your favorite aspect of LWHL?

Snack time. I know it sounds silly but snack was when I'd get to talk to people individually; not just about their hearing loss but also about their lives. Everyone who comes through our LWHL groups has a story. Snack was always the first time they were willing to share it.

What did you learn from this experience?

LWHL taught me everything about hearing loss that my classes cannot. It's one thing to

"LWHL taught me everything about hearing loss that my classes cannot. It's one thing to read in a textbook..."



Left to right: Rachel, Andrew, Gina, and Nick

read in a text book that hearing loss affects peoples' lives but it's a totally different thing to see it and hear about it from people who experience it every day. I think everyone who wants to pursue a career in audiology should participate in a course similar to LWHL.

How will you apply this experience to your future career in audiology?

This is almost hard to answer because I feel like LWHL didn't so much give me tools to use in my future career but rather gave me an improved perspective on audiology. Being a good audiologist is so much more than just testing hearing and dispensing hearing aids.

Interview by: Mary Rose Durkin B.S.
Program Assistant

So, remember all those forms you filled out?

Thank you for taking the time to fill out all of those forms! Your responses made a critical contribution to the growing data set for a new and active research program devoted to Living WELL with Hearing Loss. Our research team meets weekly and includes Dr. Fran Harris, Dr. Linda Norrix, AuD students, and Dr. Mende Davis, a collaborator from the Department of Psychology. By combining expertise, our current projects are answering questions focused on: 1) defining the need for groups and community-based rehabilitation programs,



Mary Rose Durkin, Dr. Fran Harris, and Brittany Tennyson presenting their research at ASHA

"LWHL has become one of the largest programs of its kind in the nation. That gives us the capacity to explore topics in a unique way..."

2) evaluating the balance in perspectives on hearing loss between communication partners, and 3) improving outcome measures to capture what makes a difference towards everyday life. The results will be useful at both the local and national levels. We want to monitor the

program itself to better meet the needs of our local community and improve services. At a national level, there is a significant need to expand the scientific evidence base on the effectiveness and value of group and

community rehabilitation programs. Living WELL with Hearing Loss at the University of Arizona has become one of the largest programs of its kind in the nation. This gives us the capacity to explore topics in a unique and substantive way. Our first article will be published in the next issue of *Perspectives in Audiologic Rehabilitation*. We have submitted nine abstracts to report on preliminary results at three upcoming national

conferences. We will make these available in the "Research" section of the website. Please watch for opportunities to continue to be involved in Living WELL with Hearing Loss research in the future!



Article by: Dr. Nicole Marrone, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences

Continued from the front page...

I try to remind myself that Jim is straining to hear and feels at least an equal amount of stress. Again, finding ways to mitigate the frustration and stress has been a team effort. I practice the obvious...techniques of speaking slowly and facing him. When he does not hear the message the first time, I will ask him what he did hear and then try to rephrase the message with the pieces that have already been heard. We have a standing rule that he can never pretend he heard something and "fake" a response. Before beginning a conversation, I often touch his arm to alert him something is going to be said. Perhaps most importantly, I ask myself how I would want to be treated if I had a hearing loss. The answer is always with respect and love.

"...I ask myself how I would want to be treated if I had a hearing loss. The answer is always with love and respect"

My 37-year-old attorney daughter, Melissa, also has a hearing loss, similar to Jim's, so I am witness to many of her frustrations, as well. They share a special understanding of each other's challenges, an understanding that the rest of the family can only imagine. I respect their proactive approach to dealing with this disability by seeking help from their audiologists on a regular basis. Melissa and her husband, Marc, work very hard in trying to help their two young sons understand that their mother and grandfather have hearing loss. They encourage the boys to make sure they are facing their mom and grandfather when they talk, and to speak slowly.

Establishing the "Living Well with Hearing Loss" program at the University of Arizona Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences with the help of Tucson Electric Power connected us with wonderfully skilled people. We discovered that there are many couples and individuals desperately seeking tools to hear and communicate better. We will always be grateful to Fran Harris and her team for their knowledge, patience and encouragement.

Contributed by: Dyan Pignatelli
Supporter of the Clinical Program
for Audiologic Rehabilitation in Adults

Highlights of 2011-2012

El Pueblo Senior Center

During the 2011-2012 academic year, the *Living Well with Hearing Loss Community Outreach Program* had the pleasure of being involved at El Pueblo Senior Center. Our student and faculty volunteers performed hearing screenings, held LWHL groups in Spanish and English, and counseled individuals on the effects of hearing loss. We were able reach almost 100 seniors!



Analydia Gonzalez Fulcher, the U of A audiology extern, teaching a LWHL class in Spanish at El Pueblo Senior Center.

Turn Down The Volume!

Hear@Tucson, the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association, and the SERTOMA foundation sponsored the second annual, "Turn Down the Volume" event, held on the U of A mall. This year, we measured the volume-level of 38 students' iPods and MP3 players and reminded them to protect their hearing!



Student volunteers spent the afternoon talking to students about keeping the volume of their music at a safe level

"We were encouraged to 'walk and talk' which was challenging after years of calling to each other from another room"

College of Science Awards

We are proud to announce that Mary Rose Durkin, a LWHL program assistant, was chosen as the winner of the *College of Science Award for Excellence in Service* for her continuous efforts in working with adults with hearing loss and their families. Mary Rose has developed and coordinated LWHL groups on campus and in the Tucson Community.



Dr. Beeson, SLHS Dept. Head, Mary Rose Durkin, and Dr. Marrone at the awards ceremony

Did you know...

- Since beginning the LWHL program in **Fall 2009**, we have had **33 groups**
- Our groups have had **419 participants**
- We have held **22 free community lectures** in Tucson and Green Valley
- We have had **63 students** involved
- We have held **4 staff and volunteer training sessions** at assisted living and senior centers.
- Our work has been represented at **7 state, national, or international conferences.**

On a personal note...

The sessions with Dr. Harris, Spencer, and Mary Rose were such a helpful experience for us in understanding the difficulties couples face when one of the spouses is dealing with hearing loss. As others who have been married for a long time, we had developed habits of speaking at home and in social situations that were no longer working and causing stress for us both. It was encouraging to hear similar stories from the other couples present and to have our concerns and most importantly our need for new strategies clearly addressed by Dr. Harris and her grad. assistants. We were encouraged to "walk and talk" which was challenging after years of calling to each other from another room. We became more aware that hearing loss is considered a disability and we should have the same confidence as someone with a visible physical impairment to ask for assistance. We should be aware that



Left to Right: Mr. Moreno, and Mr. & Mrs. Humphrey during an LWHL group

devices are required in theaters and other public places, by law, to assist the hearing impaired.

Our presenters as well as participants offered much information on hearing aids, the hearing process, lip-reading, and venues in Tucson, particularly restaurants that are friendly to the hearing impaired by having acoustical ceilings and furnishings to absorb ambient noise. This was all accomplished with knowledge, understanding and humor which made the sessions so valuable to all of us. We have encouraged others in our situation to consider participation to improve their quality of life, which depends so much on confident communication.

Sincerely,

Dave & Ruth Humphrey

3-week *Living Well with Hearing Loss* group participants, Thank you Dave & Ruth.

Hear@Tucson Special Guest Josh Swiller

Hear@Tucson had the incredible opportunity to bring Josh Swiller to the University of Arizona. Josh Swiller is an advocate for the Deaf and disabled as well as the author of the *Unheard: A Memoir of Deafness and Africa*, a New York Times bestseller. A diverse audience of about seventy-five people attended the lecture. The sponsors that made this event possible included: Arizona Community Foundation/Hear@Tucson, James S. and Dyan Pignatelli/Unisource, Sertoma, and AZRelay Service.



Left to Right: Cass Faux, Dr. Fran Harris, Josh Swiller, Leah Murphy, and Patrick Holkins after the lecture



Speech, Language, & Hearing Sciences

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A friendly reminder!

If you didn't hear what was said, **DON'T** say "What?" or "Huh?" Instead, remember to use these strategies to help the conversation flow!

The Keyword Strategy: Repeat what you *did* hear. This lets the speaker know that you didn't miss the *entire* message.

Let the speaker know that you have a hearing loss AND how to speak to you: If you have a hearing loss, it would help if you could please face me and speak slowly.

Relax! Habits are hard to break. Just remember to use your strategies!

University of Arizona Hearing Clinics
1131 E. 2nd St.
Tucson, Arizona 85721



The University of Arizona Hearing Clinic is a full-service hearing clinic offering diagnostic evaluations, hearing aids, assistive technology, cochlear implant mapping, Living Well with Hearing Loss classes, consultations

For appointments contact:

(520) 621-7070

For local and national resources, consult our website:

<http://lwhl.arizona.edu/>

Email us with suggestions or contributions for the newsletter:

UAHearing@gmail.com

Yes! I am proud to support the **Living with Hearing Loss program** in the Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences (SLHS) at the University of Arizona. Your contribution will support graduate student assistants or provide scholarships for those who are unable to pay for the group programs. You may designate how you would like your contribution to be distributed. (Clip and return). Contact us at UAHearing@gmail.com

Contributions are tax deductible!

Make your check payable to: **The University of Arizona. Please send to Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences, 1131 E. 2nd St. Tucson, AZ 85721**

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