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**1004 N. Hwy 92  
Jefferson City, TN  
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*Better hearing. Doesn't that sound good?*

# HEAR & NOW

## Patriot Center for Hearing Loss Newsletter



PATIENCE + PERSISTENCE = BETTER HEARING



As someone said to me recently, no one *wants* to wear hearing aids. But they do want to hear better and better hearing often starts with the use of hearing aids. Hearing aids do not restore lost hearing but they do help most people hear better. Some people notice immediate improvement but for most, the process is gradual. Do not give up! Hearing is a very complicated process that involves the brain taking what the ear delivers and then sorting it out and making sense of it all. Hearing aids allow the ears to hear better, which delivers an improved signal to the brain, but the brain still has to sort it out. This takes time. Remember, the brain hasn't had an opportunity to use a lot of sounds that have fallen out of your range of hearing. Now that those sounds are back, the brain has to re-learn what to do with them. At first, all sounds may seem loud. This is mostly because they are no longer familiar. But since these were sounds that you used to know and hear on a regular basis, it really doesn't take very long for the brain to begin to recognize them and put them in the proper perspective.



**Example:** You are sitting in a room reading a book. The light in the room gradually, very slowly, begins to dim. You don't even notice it until it becomes so dim you can no longer read your book. Do you sit in the dark wishing you could read but accepting that this is just the way it is? No, you turn the light on. But that same light you were reading in before now seems terribly bright. You squint and blink as you try to read your book but the light is so bright you can't focus. Very soon, however, your eyes adapt and you go back to reading. Now, keeping this same analogy, you would never consider not even turning on the light because it might be uncomfortable at first. So think of hearing aids as the light switch to better hearing!

Because hearing loss isn't usually true and complete loss of hearing but a loss of certain sounds, the majority of people describe it as "I can hear, but I can't understand" meaning they cannot hear words clearly. Since most people seek help for their hearing to help them hear speech better, they don't realize they are also not hearing a lot of other sounds. These sounds may not seem important but they are a part of the world around you and are sounds you have heard and should hear. The newspaper has always made a rustling sound. Since you haven't heard it in a while, it may seem extra loud to you when you are first fit with hearing aids. Given a little bit of time, you will find it becomes less noticeable and, hopefully, you will even appreciate the fact that when you turn the page, you hear it. It makes a sound *and* you hear it. Isn't that wonderful?

Now, this doesn't mean you have to accept everything without question. Sometimes, the hearing aids need to be adjusted to help make sounds more comfortable (today's hearing aids are so much better than hearing aids of the past, not only the sound quality but the adjustability...meaning we can fine tune them considerably). But sometimes, those sounds are exactly what you need to hear. You may just need a little time to let your brain re-learn them. Remember, your "normal" isn't, well, normal. You have been sitting in the dark, so to speak. So even though we can't, and don't, claim hearing aids will restore lost hearing to normal, we do work hard to get them to help you hear as normally as possible with normal being defined as what people without hearing loss hear. Even though hearing is a complicated process, the brain does this automatically once it has the proper input so all it really requires on your part is patience and persistence...

Hearing better is well worth it!



### WHAT'S NEW?

One of the biggest challenges we have faced with hearing aids has been compatibility with cell phones. Now, many hearing aids offer an optional device that turns your hearing aids into wireless, hands-free, headsets that work with your Bluetooth enabled cell phone. You can also use this device to listen to music or TV and with an adaptor, you can even turn your landline home phone into a Bluetooth connection. Not only do you get the direct input, the signal is processed through hearing aids programmed specifically for your hearing loss. Cool, huh? There are several hearing aid companies offering this and it is now available for hearing aids at three different price points, whereas it was previously only an option for the high-end, more expensive hearing aids. If this sounds like something that you could benefit from, give me a call.

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## ON THE HOMEFRONT



They grow up soooo fast...I think these birthdays are coming more than once a year! Many of you know Joey, my nephew, through previous newsletters, his artwork around the office or have heard his name come up during conversation. Our office manager, Denise, is my sister and Joey's proud mom. Our mom also works here part-time (Gerri) and is, of course, Joey's grandmother, fondly known as Nanna. With this family connection, it is no



surprise that he is a big part of our office family too. Joey was only 3 when we opened-- cute as a bug and our model for several ads, as I couldn't resist showing him off. Time flies. He turned 8 this past January 11 and is still cute as a bug. Sometimes he seems so grown up. He is this whirlwind of energy-- full of fun, wit, charm and, yes, a bit of sass. We could not love him more. Happy Birthday Joey!



Joyous celebrations are sometimes mixed with sadness. Many of you were around when our cat, Harley, went through some difficult health challenges a couple of years ago. You are so very kind to ask about her when you come in so I wanted to let you know that her life's journey came to an end on January 30. Harley has been a part of our lives since she was just a few weeks old. She took the idea of having nine lives to heart and survived all nine and then some, even to the amazement of the vets who have so wonderfully cared for her. Harley has brightened our hearts and inspired us with her will and determination. She graciously accepted whatever came her way but never gave up; she simply adjusted to doing things differently. Nothing could get her down for long. She was funny, inquisitive and beautiful. Our world is better for having the opportunity to share it with her.



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**IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE WITH HEARING  
LOSS, PASS THIS ALONG.** You might just help  
them take that first step towards better hearing.