



Hearing Wellness Center, Wireless Hearing Solutions help people with hearing loss

By Marianne Van Eenenaam | The Muskegon Chr...

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Chronicle file photo/Cory Morse

What?

Stop mumbling. Speak up.

Would you please repeat that?

Sound familiar? Does anyone you know say "What?" too often or accuse you of not speaking clearly?

Maybe that person has a hearing problem.

Maybe it's you.

There are more than 30 million people in this country who have hearing loss. Fewer than 5 percent do anything about it, said audiologist Peggy Sass-Simon.

WIRELESS HEARING SOLUTIONS



Photo: Terry Simon

HEARING WELLNESS CENTER



In many cases, hearing loss can be corrected through amplification in over-the-ear hearing aids or cochlear implants within the ear, said Sass-Simon, 47, who established Hearing Wellness Center, 6653 Grand Haven Road in Spring Lake in 2004, a business that improves people's hearing with state-of-the art, carefully-fitted instruments.

The magnetic hearing loop, equipment to help people with hearing loss, is available in numerous West Michigan churches, auditoriums, schools, homes and recently in the Muskegon County Airport.

The hearing loop wirelessly transmits sound to T-coil-equipped hearing aids, with a wire installed around the perimeter of a room. A T-coil, or telecoil, is a small coil of wire that is an antenna that picks up the signal from the magnetic loop and broadcasts it to the hearing aid.

"If we do our job right, you can't tell it (the loop) is there," said Terry Simon, 53, Sass-Simon's husband and owner of Wireless Hearing Solutions, a business he purchased in 2007 that shares a building with Hearing Wellness.

Hearing loss affects people of all ages, Sass-Simon said. "We are a very noisy society — factories, foundries, power tools, loud music — all contribute to hearing loss," she said. "Hearing loss is the second-most common childhood disorder, due to colds, tonsils, ear infections and wax build-up."

Even a slight loss of hearing means an individual misses conversations and sounds that might be significant. It can be embarrassing to have to ask for words to be repeated and makes it difficult to hold a conversation, she said.

"How rewarding it is to make such a difference in a person's life" by helping them to hear, she said.

Who: Terry Simon.

What: Wireless Hearing Solutions.

Where: 6653 Grand Haven Road, Spring Lake, 49456.

For more information: (231) 798-2399 or (888) 224-4988.

On the Web:
www.wirelesshearingsolutions.com.

HEARING AIDS

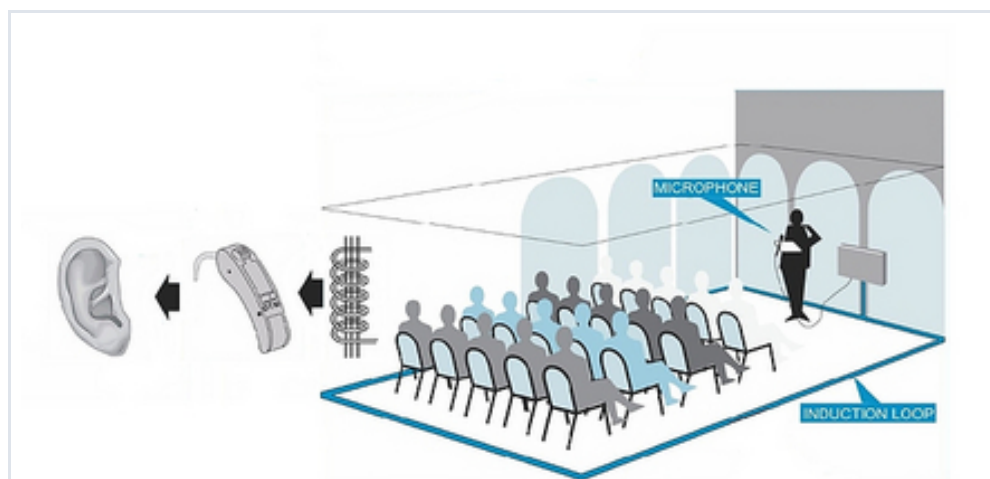
Who: Peggy Sass-Simon.

What: Hearing Wellness Center.

Where: 6653 Grand Haven Road, Spring Lake 49456.

For more information: Muskegon, (231) 798-2323; Grand Haven, (616) 846-0800; Toll free, (877) 780-2022.

On the Web:
www.hearingwellnesscenter.com.



Contributed photo

This illustration shows how a Wireless Hearing Solutions loop-assisted listening system works. A loop system transmits an audio signal to a small coil of wire inside the hearing aid, called a T-Coil. The audio output from a TV, microphone or radio is

routed to a loop amplifier connected to a wired loop. The signal can only be heard by people using hearing aids.

Sass-Simon tests children in area schools and recently helped retired nuns at Marywood Convent in Grand Rapids, as well as seeing individuals who come to her office for testing. When necessary, they are fitted with the appropriate hearing instrument, adjusted to each person's need.

Terry Simon, an engineer and industrial designer, expands on his wife's work with his own company, Wireless Hearing Solutions, which has 650 customers around the country, he said.

"In our (West Michigan) community, we have installed loop systems in more than 50 churches and school auditoriums and individual homes," Simon said.

Shortly after Gerald R. Ford International Airport in Grand Rapids was looped, the Muskegon County Airport became the second in the state, with loop installation by Wireless Hearing Solutions. A classroom in a Shelby elementary school was a recent installation.

"We do this as a community service and charge only for the materials," Sass-Simon said.

Sass-Simon said she always wanted her life's work to be in the medical field and she chose audiology, a profession that helps people of all ages to improve their hearing with inconspicuous hearing aids or implants.

She has been an audiologist for 24 years. To improve service, Sass-Simon became tri-lingual. She said she is fluent in sign language, English and "proficient" in Spanish.



Chronicle file photo/Cory Morse

The Hearing Wellness Center, 6653 Grand Haven Road, Spring Lake.

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