

## *The Gift of Better Hearing:*

# **How Starkey Hearing Foundation is Changing Lives on a World-Wide Scale**

**By Crystal Chalmers, Au.D  
Doctor of Audiology  
Owner, North State Audiological Services**

**W**hile every year of our lives is special – priceless, really – I feel that 2015 marks some extra special milestones in the field of hearing health care; locally, nationally, and globally. These are:

- In October, North State Audiological Services will celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary! I founded this practice with the goal of bringing the very best hearing care available in the United States to Chico and the surrounding communities. Today, that dream has become reality as my AudigyCertified™ Team and I have changed for the better thousands of lives through better hearing... one day at a time.
- May 1<sup>st</sup> is the start of the 88<sup>th</sup> Annual National Better Hearing Month public awareness campaign. This nation-wide public awareness campaign is intended to help the millions of Americans – and their families – who suffer from hearing difficulties.
- This year is the beginning of the fourth decade of existence for Starkey Hearing Foundation, a philanthropic organization founded by William F. “Bill” Austin, founder and CEO of Starkey Hearing Technologies in Eden Prairie, Minnesota.

Started by Austin in 1967 with a small investment, Starkey Hearing Technologies is now the largest hearing aid manufacturer in the United States and the sixth largest in the world. It has 21 facilities in over 18 countries, and employs more than 4,000 people world-wide.

## **So the World May Hear**

As successful as Austin has been in business, he is also tremendously successful in his philanthropic efforts to provide – free of charge -- hearing aids and follow-up care to people in all 50 US states and over 100 countries who could not afford to pay for the products or services themselves.

“Mr. Austin built the Starkey Hearing Foundation on his vision – 'So the World May Hear',” said Taylor Joseph, Director of Marketing & Communications for Starkey Hearing Foundation. “With the help of thousands of volunteers and sponsors, Starkey Hearing Foundation has become the embodiment of Mr. Austin's incredible vision and has provided more than 1.6 million hearing aids to people in need.”

You read that correctly: *more than 1.6 million hearing aids!*

## **From Presidents to People Just Like You**

Mr. Austin is fond of saying, “Alone we can't do much. Together we can change the world,” and the fantastic achievement's of his Foundation have been accomplished through an amazing array of partnerships, donations, and volunteer support.

Former US Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush are active ambassadors of Starkey Hearing Foundation, as are other celebrities such as actor and director Forest Whitaker, musician Sir Elton John, pro football player Ray Lewis, boxer Manny Pacquiao, and skateboard legend Tony Hawk.

Starkey Hearing Foundation's goal of reaching those in need throughout the world is enhanced by its membership in the Clinton Global Initiative, to which Starkey Hearing Foundation has pledged to provide *another* million-plus hearing aids by 2020; a goal they are 50% ahead of schedule to date!

Providing that kind of assistance takes people power, and that's where Starkey Hearing Foundation's hearing missions to countries around the world make it possible. For example, during a recent mission to Guadalajara and Cuautitlan, Mexico, more than 2,000 people of all ages were fit with hearing

aids. These people, mostly local villagers with little economic resources, came from miles away to have their hearing difficulties addressed. To further assist these patients, Starkey Hearing Foundation's "AfterCare" program provides ongoing follow-up care to the hearing aid recipients.

### **Donations: A Cornerstone of Success**

Where do all these hearing aids come from? Many come from donations which are then recycled by the Foundation.

Donors – often someone who wears hearing aids and has upgraded to newer technology, or the family of a hearing aid wearer who has passed away – can simply mail hearing aids to Starkey Hearing Foundation, or, as is the case in my office and many others across the country, bring them in to be shipped to the Foundation. All hearing aids are accepted, regardless of age, make, model, or condition.

Here's how you can donate:

Mail the hearing aid(s) directly to: Starkey Hearing Foundation, Attention Hearing Aid Recycling, 6700 Washington Avenue South, Eden Prairie, MN, 55344.

Or ...

Bring the hearing aid(s) in to my office, North State Audiological Services, at 15 Jan Court in Chico, and we will package and mail the item(s) to the Starkey Hearing Foundation for you. All donors receive a letter of recognition from Starkey Hearing Foundation (a 501(c)(3) corporation) for their charitable contribution, which is tax deductible.

And if you don't have any hearing aids to donate, Starkey Hearing Foundation does accept cash contributions as well. For more information on how to make a cash donation, visit their website at [www.starkeyhearingfoundation.org](http://www.starkeyhearingfoundation.org)

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If you – or someone you know – have hearing aids that are no longer being used, please donate them to this wonderful organization. Doing so would add to Mr. Austin's vision and change for the better the life of someone in need ... because hearing is a wonderful gift!

### **Helping the World to Hear --- By the Numbers\***

- 1** Goal: So the World May Hear
- 50** US States provided the gift of hearing
- 100+** Countries given the gift of hearing
- 1,000's** Of volunteers, partners, and supporters
- 100,000+** Hearing aids fit annually
- 175,000+** Hearing aids fit in the last year
- 560,000+** Hearing aids recycled to date
- 1,000,000** Hearing aids given through 2010 and the number that will be given this decade
- Countless** Lives changed forever through the gift of hearing

\* provided courtesy of the Starkey Hearing Foundation

### **May is National Better Hearing Month!**

#### **Learn More About Hearing Health Care at My Upcoming Seminar**

The Month of May is “National Better Hearing Month”, and once again I will be offering my annual Educational Luncheon Seminar. This seminar is a comprehensive presentation covering a variety of hearing healthcare topics such as understanding how our hearing system works, enhancing communication and listening skills, advancements in hearing aid technology, and what to look for in a hearing care professional.

The seminar will be on Wednesday May 6th, 2015 at the Chico Women's Club, from 11:30 am til 1:00 pm. A complementary catered lunch will be served. There is no cost or obligation for attending, but due to limited seating reservations are required. To reserve your space, call my office toll free at 1 (888) 844-7024 ... because hearing is a wonderful gift! – *Crystal Chalmers, Au.D.*

***About the writer:*** Crystal Chalmers, Au.D., is an AudigyCertified™ Doctor of Audiology, the owner of North State Audiological Services in Chico, and a member of AudigyGroup, the nation's largest member-owned association of independent hearing care professionals.

Since 2006, AudigyGroup has interviewed over 5,000 of the 18,000 audiologists in the United States, yet has selected only 250 to be members in this elite association. Dr. Chalmers operates the only AudigyCertified™ practice in the entire northeastern part of California. AudigyCertified™ is a trade-mark of AudigyGroup, LLC.

To learn more about Dr. Chalmers, her practice, and AudigyGroup visit online at [www.nsaudiology.com](http://www.nsaudiology.com) or call toll free at 1 (888) 844-7024