35 Years and Growing!

John Berry

Hearing & Speech Foundation
Through the Years
Giving the Gift of Sound

Kate Clabough
Daily Times Correspondent

A college job, a move to Tennessee, and a trip to Croatia were all stepping stones on the path that lead John Berry to a lifelong career of working with the deaf and hard of hearing. Add to that a heart for service, some business savvy, and the tenacity of a bulldog, and you'll see how a job became a passion for helping those less fortunate.

When Berry was in college at St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas, he became a houseparent at the Texas School for the Deaf.

"I was in charge of 700 deaf students," Berry said, "I directed programs and activities at the school. That's what led me to pursue my Masters in deaf education."

Berry transferred to the University of Tennessee where he worked for 10 years as a teacher, clinician, and supervisor of the Verbotonal Preschool Program. Verbotonal is a method that trains hearing-impaired individuals to use their residual hearing and speak with natural voice quality. The system was created by Petar Guberina, a Croatian linguist. The same system is also used to teach people to speak foreign languages and improve auditory processing skills.

"I observed a class taught by Carl Asp at UT using the Verbotonal method and saw profoundly deaf kids babbling," Berry said, "They were repeating patterns before they learned words. I knew then that there was something different, something special in that teaching method. I wanted to know more."

At first, all he had was a video, but Berry, who is not one to do anything half-heartedly, traveled to Zagreb, Croatia to study with Guberina himself. Berry became a certified Verbotonal Aural Rehabilitation Therapist and a trainer for the method. Back in the States with that first-hand knowledge, Berry decided to start his own clinic and chose Maryville for its proximity to UT and its small, but growing, size.
Berry's First Steps

The Hearing & Speech Foundation:
An Outreach of Blount Hearing & Speech Services

Blount Hearing and Speech Services was born in 1975 when a handshake could still be used as collateral. Berry and his former partner, Herb Byrd, took a big risk by setting up an office on a shoestring budget. The clinic barely survived from month-to-month, but he was determined to make it succeed. When he wasn't working at his full time job at UT, Berry was pouring his time into this new clinic. Soon he was training others across the country to help the deaf and hearing impaired with the methods he had learned and refined. Those who contacted him included the New York League for the Hard of Hearing, the Mississippi School for the Deaf and countless others. Over the years, Blount Hearing and Speech has grown to a staff of eight and has served more than 20,000 patients. They remain a full service clinic for hearing diagnostics, hearing aids, and speech-language therapy. But those are just the nuts and bolts of the business, the real story lies in Berry's dedication and drive to furnish hearing services and aids to the people of Blount and the surrounding counties.

The Birth of an Outreach Program- The Hearing and Speech Foundation

Oftentimes, John provided hearing aids out of his own pocket to those who couldn't afford them, his compassion competing with his business sense. Berry truly lived his philosophy of "take care of the financially less fortunate and never turn anyone away." But the need continued to grow and it was starting to outpace Berry's Herculean efforts. It was through this realization that John's dream of an outreach program was born. Thus, the Hearing and Speech Foundation was formed and its cornerstone program would be the Hearing Aid Assistance Program.

In 1981, Berry and the late Tutt Bradford co-founded the Hearing and Speech Foundation (HSF). The HSF served thousands of people from 29 counties in East Tennessee. These clients have benefited from the continuing efforts of an active network of donors and volunteers who generously give both time and money to support the efforts of the Foundation. The HSF contracts with Blount Hearing and Speech Services for all audiological services, which includes hearing testing, hearing aid fittings, and maintenance. John Berry and his three audiologists dedicate several hours a month to ensure Foundation clients receive quality hearing health care. All services are funded through a combination of fund raising events, grants, and donations. This non-profit organization promotes the Verbotonal Method of aural rehabilitation concepts through its four program components, which include:

- Hearing Aid Assistance Program: Providing hearing aids for low income families
- Therapy: Training hard of hearing and deaf children to speak and improving listening skills of normal hearing people of all ages
- Professional Training Program: Providing professionals with training and certification in the Verbotonal methodology so that Berry's vision can continue to help others.

Hearing Aid Assistance Program (HAAP)

Since many insurance companies will not cover the cost of hearing and speech services or hearing aids, many people living on fixed incomes are unable to receive the hearing services they need to participate in a hearing world. It is the mission of the Hearing and Speech Foundation (HSF) to bridge that gap and provide quality service and instruments to hearing-impaired individuals who are economically disadvantaged. The HAAP is open only to residents of East Tennessee whose gross household income does not exceed

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Congratulations to The Hearing & Speech Foundation on 35 years of service to Blount County!

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Therapy

Therapy services provided through the HSF are offered to individuals who have hearing loss, auditory processing disorders or phonemic awareness difficulties affecting early literacy skills. Those that may benefit from therapy services include:

• Individuals with a mild to profound hearing loss requiring rehabilitation
• Normal hearing individuals who cannot process quickly, have difficulty remembering auditory information, or have speech articulation deficits
• Individuals with cochlear implants requiring auditory training

The therapists serve clients of all ages. Their work with hearing impaired children helps to prevent developmental delays through one-on-one early intervention and to keep them from falling behind in their education. In addition, adults may seek assistance to increase their job opportunities and performance. No matter the age, all will experience a better quality of life made possible by the services at the HSF.

Hearing Aid Recycling Program

In November 2008, the HSF launched the Hearing Aid Recycling Program to help offset the cost of hearing aids for its patients. A donation of new to gently used hearing aids can be re-programmed for individuals who cannot afford the high cost of hearing aids. Donated hearing aids are vital to the Hearing Aid Assistance Program in order to maintain a variety of hearing aid options in its inventory.

The HSF accepts all makes and models of hearing aids, even if they are outdated, broken or damaged.

Should a hearing aid be unusable, the aid is sent to the original manufacturer to be used for parts. This allows the HSF to have a credit for the cost of repairs for client’s broken or damaged hearing aids.

All hearing aid donations are tax deductible. You can donate hearing aids by dropping them off with the front office staff of Blount Hearing and Speech Services at 1617 E. Broadway Avenue Maryville, TN 37804 or by mailing them to The Hearing and Speech Foundation at 1619 E. Broadway Avenue Maryville, TN 37804. For more information on the program, contact John Hinkle (jahinkle@handsf.org) or April Huggins (ahuggins@bhssinc.com) or call 865-982-8557.

Biographies

Beth Galloway, Au.D., CCC-A

Dr. Beth Galloway has been with Blount Hearing and Speech Services since May 2011. She graduated with her Doctor of Audiology degree (Au.D.) in 2011 from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She also received her Master’s in 2009 and Bachelor’s in 2007, both degrees in Audiology from UTK.

She is interested in modern hearing aid circuits and the effect it has on the interaction between auditory and speech perception. “I enjoy studying the technology,” she says. “Our field is constantly advancing its technology and algorithm solutions. Having a better understanding of the differences in technology helps me to understand better my patients’ needs, and then to fit them with appropriate technology.” She added, “Patients expect their audiologists to know exactly what the technology does and will do for them, not only to improve their communication skills but improve their quality of life. My job truly is rewarding. I am constantly reminded of the miracle of hearing given to us by our Creator. I feel blessed to be in a field that reveals this gift.” Beth has enjoyed her trips to Jamaica where she has programmed hearing aids for children in several area Deaf schools through The Hearing and Speech Foundation.

Beth grew-up in Athens, Tennessee and currently lives in Knoxville with her Husband, Daniel. Beth is a member of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association.

Paul Rook, M.S., CCC-A

Paul Rook earned his Master of Science Degree in Audiology in 1974 at the University of South Florida. As a research project he standardized the Myatt and Landes Picture Discrimination Test for preschool children. While at the University of South Florida he was also inducted into the academic Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi. He is a member of the American Speech Language Hearing Association, a Fellow and Life Member of the American Academy of Audiology and is a member of the Tennessee Hearing Society. Paul continues to be active in the audiology community. He served on the ASHA’s Audiology Standard Setting Study and served two terms as President of the Tennessee Hearing Society. He has presented papers on various topics in audiology, including cochlear dead regions and middle ear pathology. Currently he is interested in the association between hearing loss and dementia, a subject for which he is preparing a presentation.

Regarding his clinical work, he said, “When I internalized the idea that my work affected the quality of life of our patients, my attitude forever changed.” This attitude has carried over to his work with the Hearing and Speech Foundation’s patients. When asked about his work with HSF patients, he responded, “They are some of the finest people I’ve ever met, and I truly love working with them.”

Paul has another connection to the Hearing and Speech Foundation. He is married to Leslee Rook, who is the Training Coordinator and Therapist for the HSF.
Natalie McAmis, M.A., CCC-A

Natalie McAmis graduated from the University of Tennessee with her Master’s Degree in Audiology in May 2000. Although Natalie specializes in pediatric audiology and auditory processing disorders, she works with all age patient populations. She has been with Blount Hearing & Speech Services, Inc. since 1998. She was instrumental in establishing the newborn hearing screening program and its protocols at Blount Memorial Hospital. Natalie is a native of Blount County. She and her husband, Brad, have two children, Laine and Luke. She enjoys camping with her family and is very active in the preschool ministry at her church. Natalie is a member of The American Speech-Language Hearing Association.

Leslie Rook is from Knoxville, Tennessee, and received her Bachelor of Science in Special Education from the University of Tennessee in 1972. Focusing on applying the Verbotonal Method with hearing impaired children, Leslie worked 11 years as a demonstration teacher and program supervisor in the Department of Audiology and Speech Pathology at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. During this time she received Verbotonal training from Dr. Carl Asp, Professor of Audiology and Speech Pathology; Dr. Petar Guberina, the method’s originator; and two Croatian experts from SUVAG CENTRE in Croatia. Leslie studied in Zagreb, Croatia, in 1974 and 1976, and received Trainer Certification from the Institute of Aural Rehabilitation in 1980 in the specialty areas of body movements, classroom and individual therapy techniques. While at the University, Leslie taught English as a second language to deaf Taiwanese children, and consulted with professionals throughout the United States to implement the Verbotonal Method in schools, clinics and schools for the deaf, including the Dade County School System (Miami, Fla.) and the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf. In 1986, Leslie began a therapy program for an audiologist in a Knoxville-based ENT practice and used the Verbotonal strategies with more than 200 children and adults diagnosed with Auditory Processing Disorders. She continued her work with children as a Hearing Specialist with Knox County Schools in Knoxville from 1997 to 2011, as well as a consultant to the Dade County Public Schools Verbotonal Program. Leslie developed a manual “Strategies for Developing Speech, Language and Auditory Perception: Body Movements” in 2010, the first of a series of training manuals and DVDs produced by The Hearing and Speech Foundation. She has been involved in the Training Program since 2001. Leslie joined the HSF staff in June 2011 as the Director of Therapy and Training Programs. She and her husband Paul, an audiologist with Blount Hearing and Speech Services, reside in Farragut.

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”
—Anne Frank, 1929-1945

Blount Memorial Hospital salutes the Hearing and Speech Foundation (HSF) for empowering people with communication challenges to live their lives to the fullest. We share the HSF’s commitment to assisting our neighbors in need, and want to thank the HSF founders, staff, volunteers and board members for their innumerable contributions to our community.

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– Mark Twain

Thank You John Berry and the Blount Hearing & Speech Foundation for your generosity through the past 35 years.

Senator Doug Overbey
Representative Art Swan
Representative Bob Ramsey
John A. Hinkle, retired from First Tennessee Bank after 40 years of service. Prior to retiring, he was Senior Vice President of First Tennessee Bank’s Government Banking Department in Knoxville for 3 years. Prior to that he was Senior Vice President of the bank’s Regional Bank Operations Center located in Maryville which processed banking transactions for all of the middle and east Tennessee First Tennessee locations. Mr. Hinkle attended the University of Tennessee. He graduated from the American Bankers Association Business of Banking School and the Bank Administration Institute’s University of Wisconsin School of Banking. Active in the community, Mr. Hinkle has served on numerous United Way committee’s over the past 15 years, as well as chairing the 2009 United Way Campaign and was Chairman of the Board of Directors in 2012. He is a graduate of Leadership Blount County’s class of 1999 and is a Leadership Blount County’s Past Chair of the Board of Directors. Mr. Hinkle was on The Hearing & Speech Foundation’s Board from 2008 – 2010 where he created the signature fundraising event, “The Away Game Tailgate Party”, he also served on the Hearing and Speech Advocacy Board in 2011 and 2012 and was the Foundation’s building project manager for the foundation offices. He and his wife Vicki reside in Maryville and enjoy traveling.

Kathy Bennett
Speech Language Pathologist

Kathy earned her Master of Arts Degree in Speech Language Pathology in 1986 from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She is a member of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Kathy has a state license in Speech Language Pathology from the Tennessee Board of Communication Disorders and Sciences. She is also licensed by the Tennessee State Department of Education. Kathy has been with Blount Hearing and Speech Services, Inc. since 2007. Kathy has over 30 years of experience providing speech-language evaluations and treatment services in a variety of settings such as preschools, schools, private schools, and private practice. Her interests include: speech sound production, receptive and expressive language, early literacy, hearing impairments, cochlear implants, and auditory processing disorders.

Kathy Bennett
Speech Language Pathologist

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John A. Hinkle
Executive Director (Interim)

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Executive Director (Interim)

HSF Board of Directors pictured from left to right, Dr. Gerald Gibson, Jim Rose, Lynne Musick – former board member, Cole Piper, Carl Esposito, John Hinkle, Roma Renfro, Bill Parsons, John Berry, Dr. Joe Johnson and Pam Wolf
35 years and growing!

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