

# Sertoma Arizona Hearing Aid Bank



## Who we are:

- Sertoma Arizona Hearing Aid Bank is a collaborative project between University of Arizona Hearing Clinic, the Community Outreach Program for the Deaf (COPD), and SERTOMA (Service to Mankind).
- We have been supporting people with hearing loss for over 40 years.

## What we do:

- Provide reconditioned used hearing aids and services for adults who would otherwise be unable to afford hearing care. The cost to the patient is only \$95
- All hearing aids and clinical services are provided at the University of Arizona Hearing Clinic

## What we need:

- **Donation of any used hearing aids.**
  - Non-functioning aids can be used for parts.
  - Hearing aids in good condition can be fit on an individual in need.
- Financial Support. All money donated to the program goes to managing and reconditioning hearing aids for people in need.

## Have Hearing Devices to Donate? Want to make a financial donation? Contact:

- Maggie Watson at 520-344-8585 or
- Joy Newman at [joydavene@aol.com](mailto:joydavene@aol.com)



## Have a hearing loss and need a hearing aid? Contact The Community Outreach Program for the Deaf to find out if you qualify: 520.792.1906

### More Information About the Hearing Aid Bank

The Sertoma Arizona Hearing Aid Bank (SAHAB) is a joint effort of the Tucson Hearing Society, the Community Outreach Program for the Deaf (COPD), and Sertoma Clubs of Tucson. The Hearing Aid Bank is a program through which low-income adults can purchase hearing aids at an affordable price. People throughout the community donate hundreds of used hearing aids; these devices are then recased, reconditioned and readjusted for use by Pima county residents who would otherwise not be able to afford hearing aids. Since 1979, more than 2,600 low income individuals received hearing aids and services at minimal cost through the SAHAB.

- The Hearing Aid Bank began in 1979 through the efforts of Dr. Bill Hodgson at the University of Arizona Hearing Clinic and members of the Tucson Hearing Society and the Community Outreach Program for the Deaf. The Midtown Sertoma Club took over the Tucson Hearing Society's role when THS disbanded in 2009.
- The hearing aid bank was designed to provide hearing aids to those who would not otherwise be able to afford them. The program primarily serves the low-income elderly population. While there is a fair amount of financial assistance available to children and working age individuals with hearing loss, there is really no other program for the older population besides ours, even though we know hearing loss occurs most common in this adults over age 65.
- Students at the UA work to organize and maintain the Hearing Aid Bank. They sort through all of the donated hearing aids, batteries, cases, and cleaning tools to determine what could be of use to the hearing aid patients. They also keep a list of who donated hearing aids so that a thank you note may be sent to them, and they may be able to use this letter for a tax credit.
- Audiologists at the University then goes through the donations to determine which should be kept for patients, and which should be saved for salvage credit. Even if a donated hearing aid is very old and not functioning properly, the company that remakes the hearing aids for us will give us a salvage credit for them. The aids are then checked and tested to determine their characteristics and capabilities, catalogued and entered into a database.

### **What happens when a patient applies for services?**

**Qualification through COPD:** The 1<sup>st</sup> step is for a prospective patient to contact Jenifer George at COPD to see if they qualify for the Sertoma Arizona Hearing Aid Bank.

- Ms. George averages about 30 calls/month and interviews about 130-150 per year. While a patient typically must be elderly to qualify, there are some exceptions—for example, a 50 some year old going through rehab who needs to hear at support groups.
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- Individuals are referred to her from a variety of sources-some of the most common being:
  - audiologists
  - agencies
  - doctors
  - alcohol recovery centers
  - Catholic Social Services
  - AllTech, for senior citizens who become wards of the state
  - Pima Council on Aging
  - nursing homes
  - family and friends
- Jennifer will then complete a screening interview over the phone, just asking a couple of questions to see if the person is likely to qualify for services. If so, she will then set up an interview at her office where she will discuss needs and eligibility in more detail.
- In most cases, Jenifer is able to see the person that same week. If for some reason the patient cannot come in, a family member may come for them because the interview cannot take place over the phone since a signature is needed for the paperwork. At the interview, income level and medical insurance will be discussed and a short hearing history taken.
- Who qualifies for services?
  - Patients must have very limited income to qualify for services: Most clients have a monthly income of roughly \$500 (usually barely enough to cover rent, utilities, co-pays, medications, & food). Usually a good rule of thumb is that if a person is eligible for food stamps, he/she will also qualify for the Hearing Aid Bank. The person must show a check as proof that he/she needs assistance.
  - The person must be a resident of Pima County.
  - Patients must also have a current audiogram (i.e. within the last 6 mos.) If they do not, Jennifer will arrange for an evaluation either at the University paid for by their insurance or at a reduced cost.
- **Clinical Services at the University of Arizona Hearing Clinic:** If the person qualifies for a hearing aid through the HAB, Jenifer calls and schedule an appointment at the UA hearing clinic for the patient and sends their paperwork to the Hearing Clinic.
- The patient then visits the UA for a Hearing Aid Discussion appt. and Audiological Evaluation (if necessary). At that time, the implications of the patients hearing loss are discussed and the patient participates in determining an appropriate selection of hearing aid.
- Because of the often-limited supply and great demand for hearing aids, only one hearing aid can be given at a time. Although necessary, this policy is unfortunate as most people hear

better with two hearing aids than with just one.

- An earmold impression is then taken of the patient's ear to be sent in for an earmold if a BTE is chosen, or for recasing of an ITE to be made in order to fit the patient's ear. The pt. is then scheduled to return in approximately 6 weeks for the fitting of their new device. The earmold impression is then either sent to a company called Westone where an earmold is made to be used with a BTE, or if it is an ITE, the impression is sent to Prairie Laboratories who takes the circuitry out of the selected hearing aid and puts it in a new case to fit the client's ear. NOTE: Prairie labs also gives the PCHAB credit for hearing aids sent for salvage. Given the quantity of hearing aids donated to the bank and salvaged, the PCHAB has not had to pay for repair or recasing of the devices for years.
- At the fitting appointment, measures are taken to ensure an appropriate fit, both physically and acoustically and any necessary adjustments are made. An orientation to the hearing aid is provided and use care and maintenance are reviewed. The patient is given a brochure for future reference and a case to store the hearing aid in.
- **Patients pay a total of \$95 for the hearing aid**, \$25 paid to COPD, \$70 paid to the University. Additionally, they are allowed to make payment plans for this, sometimes for as little as \$15 per month.
- All follow up services are provided at no cost for the first six months, then for a \$10 office visit fee for as long as they own the hearing aid.