



CONTACT:
Susan Slater, Public Relations Coordinator
Columbus Speech & Hearing Center
614.261.5417 direct line
sslater@columbusspeech.org

Columbus Speech & Hearing Center Wants to Reduce Number of Teens with Hearing Loss

Columbus, OH - August 18, 2010 - Everyone is talking about the latest AP story: [1 in 5 Teens Found to Have a Hearing Loss](#). This frightening statistic is true! The prevalence of hearing loss in young people is increasing as an alarming rate.

Columbus Speech & Hearing Center wants to reduce the risk of Noise Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL) for children and teens. Exposure to loud sounds over prolonged periods of time, including loud music through earbuds, can cause damage to sensitive structures in the inner ear.

"We want to educate parents and kids on the importance of protecting the gift of hearing before it's too late," says Dr. Karen Mitchell, VP and Director of Audiology and Hearing Aid Services at Columbus Speech & Hearing Center. "We are simply exposed to more noise in our everyday lives than ever before, and noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) is one of the few types of hearing loss that can be prevented."

"Many teenagers and young adults consistently use iPods or mp3 devices without realizing they can damage the sensitive inner ear structures that will result in a permanent hearing loss. The change in hearing is very gradual over time, so individuals often do not notice the change in hearing until a permanent shift in hearing has occurred," Dr. Mitchell continues. "Our goal is to conserve hearing now rather than manage a permanent hearing loss later."

Kidzsafe Earbuds are one way to protect a teens' hearing. No matter how loud the volume on the digital music player is turned up, the volume will always remain below 85 decibels, which helps prevent hearing damage.

The colorful earbuds are compatible with all iPod, Zune and other MP3 devices, as well as computers, portable CD and DVD players. Kidzsafe earbuds provide the same high quality frequency and response as regular headphones.

Hear for Life is a program presented by Columbus Speech & Hearing Center. It consists of classroom presentations and workshops to teach young students about the dangers of exposure to loud sounds. The interactive program is designed to change the knowledge, attitudes, and intended behaviors of 3rd-5th graders regarding Noise Induced Hearing Loss prevention through a series of short presentations and hands-on activities.

Games like [How Loud is Too Loud](#) and [What's That Sound](#) help students understand safe decibel levels.

For more information on NIHL or to purchase a pair of Kidzsafe earbuds, contact Columbus Speech & Hearing Center at 261.263.5452 or hearing@columbusspeech.org.

Columbus Speech & Hearing Center, founded in 1923, is a non-profit United Way organization serving over 10,000 people annually. Services include hearing evaluations, hearing aids, speech therapy for children and adults, occupational therapy and treatment, and vocational services for the Hard-of-Hearing, Deaf and Deaf-Blind through the Comprehensive Program for the Deaf and Ohio Deaf-Blind Outreach Program. Generous charitable giving from the community help offset the cost of the Center's valued services for low-income families. For more information, www.columbusspeech.org.