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| **2016 Women for ATSU Awards Application** | |
| **Timestamp** | 3/13/2016 15:06:26 |
| **PROJECT TITLE** | HALP (Hearing Aid Loaner Program - exact title to be finalized with the Office of Development). |
| **FUNDING REQUEST** | $3,820 |
| **PROJECT BUDGET** | ♣ Six (6) Phonak (manufacturer name) Behind the Ear (BTE) style standard level technology hearing aids @$550 each = $3300 ♣ Two (2) Phonak compatible assistive listening technology blue tooth accessories @$200 each = $400 ♣ Manufacturer shipping & handling = Approximately $20  ♣ Hearing aid batteries of various sizes as needed = $100 (enough to purchase approximately 8 to 12 packs) Total = $3,820.  Note: The Phonak brand of hearing aids and assistive devices was chosen because they are most compatible with the assistive technology used by most school districts in the valley. Also, Phonak is one of the four top hearing aid manufacturers in the country today with a proven track record of versatile, reliable, and cosmetically appealing products, top-notch research and development, and excellent customer service. The BTE style of hearing aids was selected as it provides the greatest flexibility to fit a wide range of hearing losses across the life span. |
| **MINIMUM FUNDING REQUESTED** | ♣ Four (4) Phonak BTE style standard level technology hearing aids @$550 each = $2200 ♣ One Phonak compatible assistive listening technology blue tooth accessory = $200 ♣ Manufacturer shipping & handling = Approximately $20  ♣ Hearing aid batteries of various sizes as needed = $50 (enough to purchase approximately 4 to 6 packs)  Total = $2,470 |
| BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION | The HALP (Hearing Aid Loaner Program) is envisioned as a need-based program for adults and children with hearing loss. The purpose of HALP is to start a “hearing aid bank” providing long-term loaner or permanent hearing aids to individuals with hearing loss who are unable to afford them. Special priority will be given to children (0-18 years of age) with newly identified hearing loss.  According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2010), about 2 to 3 per 1000 (approximately 12,000) babies are born with a hearing loss (about 50% of which is genetic) each year in the U. S., which makes hearing loss the most common birth defect. In addition, another 4000 to 6000 children, 0-to-3-years of age who pass newborn hearing screening, are later diagnosed with hearing loss (Madell, & Flexer, 2014). Further, approximately 15% (37.5 million) of American adults over 18 years report some difficulty hearing (Blackwell, et al., 2014). Unaddressed hearing loss can affect virtually every aspect of life including school and job performance, leisure activities, and relationships among family and friends. For children, hearing is critical for normal speech and language development. Studies have shown that left untreated, even a mild hearing impairment can result in delayed speech and language, social-emotional or behavioral problems, and lags in academic achievement (Yoshinaga-Itano et al., 1998; Bess et al., 1988). With early intervention and proper amplification, however, most children with hearing loss are able to progress at an age-appropriate rate (Geers et al., 2009).   According to the National Institute of Deafness and Communication Disorders (2014), of the adults 20 years and older with hearing loss who could benefit from hearing aids only about 46% have ever used them. Cost is often cited as a barrier. Financial hardship should not be a barrier to effective communication when hearing aids and assistive technologies are so readily available and proven to be effective.   Through HALP we will provide amplification: (1) on a short-term basis to any individual while she/he collects funds to purchase amplification, (2) to children and adults while their devices are being repaired, and (3) on a permanent basis to individuals who have exhausted all financial avenues. These individuals also will be provided hearing aid services such as programming and routine maintenance, and batteries through the HALP program and ATSU-AFA Institute for the duration of the loaner program, and for a year for those that are permanently awarded the devices. Most third-party payers, Medicare and Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) Administration cover hearing evaluation services and those will not be provided through the HALP. Two hearing aids will be provided to each individual to optimize benefits unless the hearing loss is unilateral.  Personnel and other supporting resources required for this program are readily available at the ATSU AFA Institute, which is a fully functional audiology practice serving the community. The AFA Institute also serves as a clinical training facility for graduate audiology students at ATSU, who will be involved in this project. |
| **EXPECTED OUTCOMES** | Hearing loss has significant financial and societal impact. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that the lifetime public cost public for a child with an untreated hearing loss is over $400,000, mostly for special education services (Honeycutt et al., 2004; Mohr et al., 2000). Additionally, 50-70% of adults who have untreated moderate to profound hearing loss, before retirement age, are expected to earn only 50 to 70% of their non-hearing loss peers, therefore, decreasing their retirement income (Mohr et al., 2000). Hearing loss also limits health care access particularly for elderly patients because if a person cannot hear/understand what is being said, it becomes a barrier to becoming an active participant in the healthcare process. Further, recent studies (e.g., Lin et al., 2011) have shown that hearing loss can increase the risk of dementia for older adults. Societal and caregiver costs for dementia are well documented, estimated at about $604 billion in 2010 (Alzheimer’s Disease International, 2010; Wimo et al., 2013).  The HALP is a great fit for the Women for ATSU Program; it can have a major impact on the overall health and wellness of the most vulnerable of people, children and older adults of limited means, at a relatively small cost. It also is completely aligned with ATSU’s mission of whole person healthcare. If this project is endowed, we envision it as the start of a fund that will inspire other donors to contribute over time allowing us to continue the work of providing amplification to those in need, reducing the financial burden on families and society, and promoting a higher quality of life through continued mainstream interaction. |
| **PROJECT CONTACT NAME** | Zarin Mehta, PhD |
| **PROJECT CONTACT EMAIL** | zmehta@atsu.edu |
| **PROJECT CONTACT DAYTIME PHONE NUMBER** | 4802456261 |
| **SUPERVISOR CONTACT NAME** | Tabitha Parent Buck, AuD |
| **SUPERVISOR CONTACT EMAIL** | tparent@atsu.edu |
| **DEAN’S APPROVAL** | Yes |