



Disability  
Talks

Carrie  
Lynn

## Technology helps make sweet noise

During one of my Monday night moderated chat sessions at [www.hearingexchange.com](http://www.hearingexchange.com), one of my online friends shared news of new technology helping hearing-impaired individuals called Loop America - an assistive listening system that broadcasts sound directly through hearing aids.

Being a very curious person, I decided to research this new concept.

People with T-coil hearing aids (most behind-the-ear and in-the-ear hearing aids routinely come with telecoil sensors) have settings that can be adjusted in different hearing situations. For example, when I use the phone I switch to a setting that allows me to hear on the phone more clearly.

The loop system transmits magnetic energy to telecoil-equipped hearing aids through a wiring system that can be installed in any venue including a home, church, theater, etc. This technology is predominantly used throughout the United Kingdom. In fact the UK Disabilities Discrimination Act says by the year 2004 any business or organization providing a service to the general public must put in place the Loop system.

The American Disabilities Act requires only businesses and government offices to offer FM headsets. Individuals wear the headsets to block out background noise and focus on the intended speaker. However, many individuals choose not to use the headset because it draws attention to their disabilities. Also, FM systems operate on differing frequencies, requiring receivers for each venue.

### SUCCESS

David Meyers, a social psychologist at Hope College in Holland, Mich., who is also hard of hearing, experienced the loop system in Scotland. While touring the 800-year-old Iona Abbey, he changed the T-coil setting on his hearing aid and was amazed at how clear the speakers and musicians sounded. After experiencing this new technology first hand, he decided to bring it to the United States starting with his hometown of Holland.

Premotivation Audio in Michigan offers the same technology as its counterpart in England that manufactured the Loop system. It takes approximately two weeks to install the system and to train soundboard operators on its use. The Loop retails for \$1,100 (plus installation) for the system, which covers 5,400 square feet of space.

At the end of 2002, the Holland-Zeeland community was considered a model loop community. Many individuals, businesses, churches and public venues in Holland have installed the Loop system, including Hope College. Organizations like the Michigan Self-Help for Hard of Hearing People support this new and exciting technology. They take the position that all public places should be equipped with the Loop technology to help keep the hard of hearing public informed.

### GREAT POTENTIAL

I am very impressed with this new technology because I see the potential it has to

PLEASE SEE TYNNAN, C6

## Tough lessons

West Bloomfield students bring powerful message to local schools, synagogues

BY SUSAN B. TAUBER  
STAFF WRITER

What comes around in *What Goes Around*, middle school students will find out Wednesday.

A group of West Bloomfield High School

### PLAY INFORMATION

Project TRUST is coming to Farmington on these dates: Monday, April 7 - 7:15 p.m., Adat Shalom Synagogue, "What Goes Around"; Friday, May 16 - 1:45 p.m., Wood Creek Elementary, "Peace Up"

actors will present a powerful play, *What Goes Around*, aimed at the stark realities of stereotyping, bullying, violence, sexual harassment, racism, alcohol abuse and more. They'll perform in April at Adat Shalom in Farmington Hills and in May at Wood Creek Elementary, but their first audiences were students from Abbott and Orchard Lake middle schools in West Bloomfield.

"We will be trying to make the students uncomfortable," said one of the actors, senior Melissa French. "We are portraying real-life issues."

Melissa is joined by fellow cast members Nate Piper, Dan Skelton, Pat Scanlon, Hilery Hayman and Adam Fanger, who are seniors; juniors Jenna Saltzman and Aaron Leborovic; and sophomores Andrew Lubetsky, Shayna Lax, Amanda Walters and Britany Schannes. The play is quite straightforward.

"We don't hedge the issues," said Arlene Sorokin, producer of IlluminArt Productions.

Sorokin, IlluminArt artistic director Patty Coresnick and West Bloomfield High drama teacher Robin Nadler are working with the Intermediate



PHOTOS BY TOMMY WELLS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Andrew Lubetsky portrays feelings of anguish over a teen being murdered. The scene is part of the 'What Goes Around' play performed by West Bloomfield High School Intermediate drama class students.

Drama students on the production of *What Goes Around* for middle and other high school students and a second play, *Peace Up*, geared for elementary school students. *Peace Up* focuses more on conflict resolution and alternative, acceptable ways to deal with anger.

IlluminArt Productions brought these plays to the West Bloomfield drama students to present to other schools in the West Bloomfield, Bloomfield Hills, Walled Lake and Farmington school districts through a program called

Project TRUST (Teaching and Reaching Using Students and Theater).

These two theater productions are different from the plays the students are used to presenting.

The teens and Barbara Berger White, program director of outreach from Jewish Family Service of Metropolitan Detroit, participated in a two-day workshop to familiarize themselves with the plays and the issues.

Jewish Family Service partnered with the high school and IlluminArt to bring the peer education programs to the area.

The elementary school play features audience participation throughout the production. The high school play will be followed by a discussion session.

Educational materials are provided to teachers and social workers prior to the presentation to facilitate pre- and post-play discussions. Jewish Family Service provides resource information for referrals.

"These plays are a good way to teach kids about these issues," said Amanda. "We get them involved with fun and humor so they can get the most out of the meanings."

Adam said preparing for these plays is hard, because the actors are learning two differ-

ent productions at the same time.

"We play different parts in each of the plays. We do a lot of role switching," explained Andrew.

"These are difficult to perform," added Nate. "We have to keep the productions entertaining while making them informative. We have to really think about how we deliver our lines."

"Also, we have to be careful not to be condescending to the younger students," said Aaron. Shayna said she's also finding these productions meaningful to be involved in.

"Usually, I participate in community theater. These two productions have a lot more meaning in them than anything else I've ever done," she said.

Dan said this experience is rewarding.

"This is only my second time doing a play. I need the experience," said Dan.

He plans to pursue acting as a career.

The young actors are performing *Peace Up* and *What Goes Around* through May. For information on bringing either of these plays to a school, contact Sorokin at IlluminArt Productions at (248) 737-9610.

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Hilery Hayman, along with the rest of the cast, rehearses for two upcoming plays that focus on social issues.

## Before buying, learn all about those Easter bunnies

Michigan Rabbit Rescue urges anyone who plans to buy a pet rabbit for Easter to first find out how to care for their new pets.

"Many pet stores and breeders promote bunnies as pets, however fail to inform owners of the facts of rabbit care," said Michigan Rabbit Rescue Executive Director Renee Miller.

"When you bring home a bunny, you are taking on responsibility for medical care, proper diet, exercise and income habitat for a pet that will live eight to ten years. This is a serious commitment just like any house pet."

Miller said in the past five years since the organization has been working to inform the public about rabbit care, there has been a decrease in rabbit surrenders in July and August, when people generally start to give away or abandon their "Easter bunnies."

This is the time when baby bunnies reach sexual maturity and start to act hormonal, she said.

"I think people are learning to spay and neuter, which heads off this type of behavior, our education programs are



Michigan Rabbit Rescue's Mindy Naumann read during storytime at Borders Books and Music in Farmington Hills on March 8 and 9. About 10 children attended both days.

helping people learn to live with their habits and preventing many surrenders, and there is a general decline in impulse adoptions."

"Surrenders still outnumber our space and resources to help them, but they tend to be more consistent over the year instead of a huge increase at the end of summer. I have spo-

ken to many people who saw our television spots or newspaper articles and decided that their children were not old enough for any pet, not just a rabbit. Most of them have thanked me for the information. Some have returned later when their children were older and adopted a rescue rabbit instead of buying from a



The organization brought along a few furry friends, including Mindy's rabbit Sadie.

breeder or pet store."

Bunnies can make great pets for the right family if they follow some simple guidelines. Instead of buying a bunny, consider adopting a homeless one from an organization like Michigan Rabbit Rescue.

These bunnies have been socialized in a foster home and the caregiver can fill you in on the pet's personality and temperament.

For more information, contact Michigan Rabbit Rescue at (586) 578-1152 or visit their web site at [www.michiganrabbitrescue.org](http://www.michiganrabbitrescue.org).

### Bunny facts

Michigan Rabbit Rescue provides a wealth of information about the care and feeding of rabbits, which:

- Can be easy to litter train
- Live twice as long if kept inside instead of outdoors
- Like to chew, so it is important to "bunny-proof" your home

• Are complex, intelligent animals that can learn their names and form deep attachments to their owners and mates

• Have unique personalities and are very special creatures that love to be part of the family

• Should be spayed or neutered just like dogs and cats

• With proper care can live for eight to ten years

• Need veterinary care just like any other pet

• Require a healthy diet made up of lots of dark green leafy vegetables and hay

• Typically do not like to be held or carried