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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Hearing Aids Improve the Life of Young Appleton Boy**

**Neenah, WI. (November 23, 2004)** – Judy Hoelzel vividly remembers the day her son Harrison was born. After going into labor when she was 24 weeks pregnant, Harrison was born weighing only one pound six ounces and measured 12-1/2 inches long. As a result of the premature birth, Harrison was left with medical problems too numerous to mention.

Today at the young age of five, Harrison has had more surgeries than most people experience in a lifetime. Having undergone 24 different surgeries, this bright and energetic little boy has overcome insurmountable obstacles to beat the odds. Every day the Hoelzel's deal with Harrison's countless medical problems, which include a feeding tube, taking seizure medication to control his epilepsy, mild cerebral palsy that requires him to wear braces on his ankles, autism and partial vision. Judy had to leave her mill job at Appleton (formerly Appleton Papers) so she could devote more time to caring for Harrison.

Yet another challenge facing Harrison is his hearing loss. It was first discovered when he failed the required newborn screening twice while in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit at Theda Clark Medical Center. According to Mark Conradt, Doctor of Audiology with Ear, Nose and Throat Specialists of Wisconsin, "Infants that are admitted to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit have a much higher risk of hearing loss because of the additional complications that they face". Currently, all five hospitals in the Fox Cities provide newborn screening. Hearing loss is one of the most prevalent chronic health issues in the U.S. affecting 17 in 1,000 children under the age of 18.

Harrison was diagnosed with mild to moderate conductive hearing loss and was fitted with his first hearing aids at the age of one. Due to his young age and problems with chronic fluid in his ears, Harrison could not wear the hearing aids.

A few years later, Harrison's pediatrician referred the Hoelzel's to Dr. Robert Bechard, an Otolaryngologist with Ear, Nose and Throat Specialists of Wisconsin in Oshkosh. After removing Harrison's adenoids and placing a ventilation tube earlier this year, Dr. Bechard and Mark Conradt determined that Harrison's speech and language development was not progressing and that the timing was right to give hearing aids another try.

According to Judy, "I was really skeptical that Harrison wouldn't keep the hearing aids in his ears. Now he wakes up every morning and says he wants his hearing aids in. Mark also developed a little shark clip that attaches the hearing aids to the back of Harrison's shirt making them more secure."

"Harrison's treatment is complicated by the fact that he has more than one cause for his hearing loss. With a team approach our practice can evaluate and treat both the surgical and underlying hearing issues involved. It's been gratifying to see the progress Harrison has made as a result of treatment," commented Dr. Bechard.

Conradt explained, "Working with a child like Harrison who has multiple problems certainly makes it more challenging so we have to be patient and creative when testing. We may even consider testing more often and in shorter intervals. Working with Dr. Bechard was helpful in determining his middle ear status and when the timing was right to initiate a trial period for the hearing aids. Many parents think that their child will never tolerate or leave the hearing aids in their ears. However, at follow-up appointments, parents tell us that the hearing aids go on in the morning and don't come off until bedtime."

"We've seen dramatic results in Harrison's speech over a relatively short period of time. Before Harrison had hearing aids his vocabulary consisted of 450 to 500 words but only single utterances. Now he is saying three, four and five word sentences. The other day I told him to repeat Lake Winnebago and it was amazing to hear him repeat those words," Judy said with a smile. The Hoelzel's have also noticed that the hearing aids have greatly improved Harrison's behavior both at home and in school.

Harrison continues to see Dr. Bechard and Mark Conradt every three to six months. Judy explained, "I like the fact that both Dr. Bechard and Mark are located in the same office. It's much easier to make our appointments now since we had been seeing a physician in Madison and another specialist in the Fox Cities." When asked what advice she would give to parents who might find themselves in a similar situation Judy replied, "Make sure that the physician and audiologist you see specialize in treating children. In just five short months, hearing aids have opened up a whole new world for Harrison and the outcome has been wonderful."

Thanks to his new hearing aids, Harrison's future is sounding better and better. Harrison's seven year old brother Hunter agrees saying, "Now it's easier to talk to my brother."

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Ear, Nose and Throat Specialists of Wisconsin serves the greater Fox Cities region with five convenient locations in Oshkosh (2), Neenah, Ripon and Berlin. For a complete listing of services and office hours visit [www.entwis.com](http://www.entwis.com) or call 1-800-435-4851.