

## WHO HAS SEEN THE WIND?

*Who has seen the wind?*

*Neither I nor you:*

*But when the leaves hang trembling,  
The wind is passing through.*

*Who has seen the wind?*

*Neither you nor I:*

*But when the trees bow down their heads,  
The wind is passing by.*

*-Christina Rossetti*

A simple poem illustrates the effect of the wind... invisible, yet impactful. Hearing loss, especially when untreated, is much like the wind, having a tremendous negative effect on a person, yet be completely invisible...painless...a loss of omission... we don't know what we're missing simply because we are missing it.

Hearing loss is often the most "invisible" to the person who has the hearing loss.

Hearing loss, in its simplest definition, is a dulled sense- specifically, the function of the ear. The ear's role in hearing is to react to sounds in the environment and send this information to the brain in the form of neural impulses. The brain receives this information and interprets it, completing the process of "hearing." This process is complicated and involves lots of structures within the auditory system. When the system functions normally, we hear and understand with pristine precision, especially when the brain is "young" and not compromised due to the effects of

aging. When hearing loss happens, the system breaks down, and our hearing is impaired.

Hearing loss is the most common sensory impairment affecting individuals aged 75 and older, and is becoming more prevalent as more people living longer due to improved health care. When the auditory system is compromised, more effort is required of the brain to process the incomplete information received from the ear. We try "fill in the blanks" and to compensate by relying more on our other senses. When a sound occurs and no additional sensory information is available, we may not even realize we missed something. This lack of awareness can separate us from the people and things around us.



It's like an invisible barrier, or fog, that surrounds us, leaving us out of touch with our surroundings.

Hearing loss (like the wind), is an unseen, invisible force that can have a significant impact on quality of life. The effects begin small and progress as hearing loss worsens. For many, it starts with others sounding like they are mumbling because some sounds cannot be heard well. The individual often has to ask others to repeat themselves, which becomes frustrating for both parties, who may shy away from long or in-depth conversations because of the uneasiness and frustration. Hearing in the presence of background

*continued on reverse*

noise may be difficult, and social gatherings become isolating because of the inability to understand what people are saying and inability to contribute to the conversation. Over time, these barriers to communication can lead to strained relationships and limited interactions.

*“We can’t control the wind, but we can adjust our sails.”*

*– Thomas Monson*

As this quote implies, we can seek a vast improvement in hearing loss with modern hearing aid technology. With the improvement they provide, we don’t have to rely on others to translate or fill in gaps for what we didn’t hear, and a sense of independence can be regained. When we don’t have to strain to figure out what others are saying, we can be more involved in the conversation. When we can hear and understand, we are informed, alert, oriented....alive!



We asked three patients of Willow Valley’s IntegrityForward Hearing Solutions to share their experiences with hearing loss and hearing aids. Their comments are rich and insightful...see their full answers here (links). Below is a summary of their comments.

## JOIN US ON A QUEST FOR BETTER HEARING, BETTER HEALTH, AND A BETTER LIFE.

If you would like to schedule an appointment for our services—from something as simple as a baseline, complimentary screening to having us take over your care or maximize the benefits of your current hearing aids—it starts with a simple phone call to **717.464.6411** for an appointment at either of our locations.

We look forward to meeting you!

### Main Office

North Community  
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