

Loud and Clear



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Partnership with TPA Grows

Following a successful grant partnership in the fall of 2025, St. Joseph and the TPA Hearing Trust continue our partnership with a new grant funding parent support and education services. (Story continues inside)

Listen.
Speak.
Support.

A Natural Partnership

TPA Funds Support Teletherapy and Parent Services

St. Joseph's growing partnership with the Traveler's Protective Association and TPA Hearing Trust is expanding access to St. Joseph's teletherapy and parent support services.



Founded in 1890, the Traveler's Protective Association (TPA) is a community service organization headquartered in St. Charles, Missouri. The TPA Hearing Trust was established in 1975 to provide financial assistance and support to people with hearing loss.

St. Joseph and the TPA make for natural partners, given how closely our mission and values mirror the Hearing Trust's. The partnership began in August 2025 when TPA awarded a grant supporting our iHear teletherapy service. Since then, grant funds have helped students across our Outreach Services program access virtual LSL sessions and specialized educational support. "Because of TPA's dedication, children across America can continue to receive the life-changing services they need to be successful in school and life," said Chief Program Officer Lindy Powell.

Following the success of the initial grant funding, TPA tripled their initial support with a new grant in February 2026 focused on parent support and education, particularly for families navigating school transitions. The continued partnership enables St. Joseph providers to support families by attending case conferences, collaborating with audiologists and other medical professionals, and delivering individualized coaching and guidance. These initiatives will give parents and caregivers the skills, resources, and confidence they need to act as their child's first and best advocate.



LSL Provider Barb Meyers and parent advocate Mariana Barquet (iN Hands & Voices) deliver an Early Intervention session via iHear.

"This grant helps equip students and their parents to advocate for the services and opportunities they need and deserve, even after they've left St. Joseph's care," said TPA Chief Administrative Officer Robert Schapp. "We are delighted to leverage our resources through such a magnificent organization, and we look forward to our partnership continuing."

Making Waves

Pilot Diagnostic Program Closing Gaps in Early Intervention

With the support of a local foundation, St. Joseph is piloting an innovative new remote Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) testing program in northern Indiana as part of its efforts to close the gap between hearing loss diagnosis and early intervention, giving children the support they need to develop communication skills alongside their hearing peers.

The program, called **TeleWave**, is a one-of-a-kind collaboration with Texas Hearing Institute (THI) and will launch this spring facilitated by Lead Early Intervention Specialist Caitlin Stacy. The initiative builds on the groundbreaking remote ABR model developed by Dr.



TEXAS
HEARING
INSTITUTE

Jennifer Wickesberg, Director of Audiology at THI in Houston. Originally launched in 2023, the model addresses barriers faced by families in rural communities where access to pediatric diagnostic audiology services can be limited. TeleWave now represents the first interstate expansion of this successful approach, bringing together two OPTION schools that share a commitment to early identification of hearing loss and timely intervention for young children.

During the pilot phase of TeleWave, Early Intervention Specialist Jeanna Sheriff, who serves families across northern Indiana, will travel to families' homes to assist with the testing process. Although the equipment is set up in the home, a pediatric audiologist at THI will conduct the test and deliver same-day results. "Our goal is to meet families where they are, both literally and emotionally, by removing barriers and uncertainty during a critical time in their child's development," said Stacy.



During the ABR, soft clicking tones are played through earphones, while electrodes measure the brain's response to the sounds.

An ABR is a safe and painless test that measures how a baby's hearing nerve and brain respond to sound while the child sleeps naturally. The test allows specialists to determine whether a baby has hearing loss and, if so, how severe it may be. If hearing loss is identified, the family will be connected with local physicians and pediatric audiologists in Indiana for ongoing care and follow-up services.

Although TeleWave will serve 10 families during its pilot phase, Caitlin Stacy is optimistic about the program's future and hopes to expand the model across Indiana and eventually into Missouri. She said, "By combining in-home support with remote pediatric audiology expertise, we are creating a more accessible and equitable model of care that helps families move forward with confidence and has the potential to transform access to early hearing diagnosis and intervention."

On the Right Track

A Successful Year of Hear it Begins



Following a successful launch in October 2024, Hear it Begins is creating positive outcomes for St. Joseph families. The landmark program, inspired by real experiences, connects families to expedited care following a child's hearing loss diagnosis. To date, Hear it Begins has supported nearly 20 families in Indiana, Missouri, and across the Midwest through iHear teletherapy.

Through Hear it Begins, providers deliver immediate LSL intervention, sometimes even before a child is fitted with hearing technology. "We as a family are very grateful for the opportunity we had to work with this program before the cochlear implant devices," one parent commented. "It helped us begin to gain trust with our daughter for communication."

In addition, the 8-week program provides guidance and support to parents and caregivers. The St. Joseph team helps with navigating the First Steps process, collaborates with other medical professionals to streamline care, and serves as a resource during an often-overwhelming period. Another parent said, "I felt more prepared and equipped as a parent, and I'm grateful for how proactive Hear it Begins allowed me to be!"



Hear it Begins helps families through the early days, including being fitted for hearing aids.

Further evidence of Hear it Begins' success is clear in St. Joseph's 2025 enrollment data. Over the course of the year, the average age of enrollment in Early Intervention services decreased from 12.8 months to just 9 months old. As the program continues to grow, we aim to decrease the age of enrollment further to the nationally recognized standard of 6 months old.

"We believe Hear it Begins has really helped our daughter succeed and excel in what she is learning post-implantation and activation of her CIs."

-Hear it Begins Parent

In combination with other outreach initiatives, Hear it Begins is a critical part of our commitment to helping families access quality early intervention services and creating probable LSL outcomes for all children with hearing loss.

An Open Letter

From Interim President Patrick Johnson

Imagine not hearing your child say "Hi Mommy," "Let's play Daddy," or "I love you..."

As you know, many families receiving a diagnosis of hearing loss can feel overwhelmed. At St. Joseph Hearing + Speech, we continue to see possibility where others see uncertainty. Through exceptional Listening and Spoken Language programs- delivered with the compassionate spirit of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet- children with hearing loss are learning to listen, speak, and thrive.



Left to Right: Mark Prange, Patrick Johnson, Audrey Nemeth, Katie Griffin, and Lindy Powell at SJEM Sponsorship Day, October 2025.

My name is Patrick Johnson. I am the Interim President for St. Joseph Hearing + Speech. I am in this role after serving eight years as a Member of the Board of Directors, and until we begin the process of recruiting a new President for the organization. As part of my role, I would like to assure you that we continue to deliver upon the following:

- Early intervention services
- Individualized speech and language therapy
- Family support and guidance
- Access to specialized listening technology

The team at St. Joseph Hearing + Speech is ever-dedicated to serving our students and families. Regardless of any change that comes our way, we continue to deliver upon our Mission. Thank you for your support as we move into the future.

With gratitude,

Patrick Johnson
Interim President, St. Joseph Hearing + Speech



Up Next @ St. Joe's

THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2026

6:00-9:00 PM

502 EAST EVENT CENTRE

502 E Carmel Drive

Carmel, IN 46302



Start Your Engines!

Join us for a turbo-charged evening in a BRAND-NEW location!

At Sound of Speed, we will bestow the prestigious Dr. Richard T. Miyamoto Heroes for Hearing Award upon **Mariana Barquet** of Indiana Hands & Voices in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the Listening and Spoken Language field.



Additionally, we'll honor St. Joseph LSL Provider and Professional Learning Coordinator **Barb Meyers** with the Mary Boucher Jones Compassionate Service Award in recognition of her outstanding service to our children and families.

Ready to join us? Want to help honor of our awardees?

Visit sjhearingspeech.org/sos26 to register to attend Sound of Speed or to make a gift today.

Listen. Speak. Support.

sjhearingspeech.org

