

# Opening Up The World Of Silence

The Partin Speech and Hearing Center at Thoms Rehabilitation Hospital is a testament to an Asheville couple's concern for the evaluation and treatment of deaf children.

The hospital's speech and hearing department was established in 1955 and occupied several small rooms in what is now the central wing.

The need for a specially designed area with soundproofing and unobtrusive observation by families was quickly apparent, but like many good things, long in coming.

A personal interest in better facilities for evaluation and treatment of deaf children prodded Mr. and Mrs. K.W. Partin to push for establishment of a regional center with state-of-the-art architectural design and equipment. The couple went one step further and made significant monetary donations to see that dream become a reality.

They helped build a freestanding building on the Thoms grounds with a comfortable and large lobby, an attractive entrance and courtyard, two audiology suites, a group therapy room and several speech therapy rooms with separate individual offices for staff. In 1975, the center was renamed the Partin Speech and Hearing Center to honor the couple's contributions.

Thoms has expanded time and time again since then, and the center is now connected to the main hospital building through the new outpatient center, which surrounds two sides of the original center. But the Partins concern for the program has been unabated.

Their gifts over the years have allowed Thoms to purchase a variety of materials and equipment, including the Auditory Brainstem Response device for hearing evaluations, and most recently, an office computer for word processing with a specialized speech and hearing clinic management program developed by the American Speech and Hearing Association.

The center offers complete diagnostic and therapeutic speech and language services for children and adults for: aphasia, articulation disorders, cerebral palsy, cleft palate, delayed speech-language development, laryngectomy, stuttering and fluency disorders, swallowing disorders, voice disorders, and cognitive deficits.

A full range of audiological diagnostic techniques and services are offered including: hearing evaluation, hearing aid evaluation, fitting and providing of hearing aids, industrial hearing testing and conservation programs, and auditory brainstem response tests. This last is a test that can determine hearing levels in infants, difficult to test patients and those who cannot respond correctly to conventional testing. It is also used in the diagnosis of auditory nerve and brainstem problems.



Staff Photo By GARY FIELDS

Joan Chesick, audiologist, demonstrates the fitting of a hearing aid and administers a hearing test to a patient, at right. Chesick's work is part of the Partin Speech and Hearing Center at Thoms Rehabilitation Center.



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