

SIUE speech-language pathology program offers free community hearing screenings

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EDWARDSVILLE - For homeschooling mother Mindy Jefferson, hearing screenings are not readily available for her family. That's why Mindy, her four kids, mother and nephew traveled from Alhambra to take advantage of free hearing screenings being offered by Southern Illinois University Edwardsville speech-language pathology graduate student clinicians.

"We had not had our hearing checked in quite a while, so we loved this service," Jefferson said after her kids, ages 7-12 were screened.

"It's important to have your hearing checked, and this was an incredibly convenient way to do it," added Jefferson's mother Karen File. "It was a simple process. They gave me helpful information and resources for follow up."

SIUE graduate students, under the supervision of a licensed speech-language pathologist or audiologist, conducted the screenings on Friday, April 13. They will offer another free screening opportunity at the Edwardsville Public Library from 1:15-4:45 p.m. on Friday, April 20.

The free community offerings have been made possible by a \$2,500 grant from the Edwardsville Community Foundation. The funding allowed the School of Education, Health and Human Behavior's (SEHHB) Speech-Language-Hearing Center to purchase new, updated digital audiometers that are light weight and portable.

"These free hearing screenings blend several of our school's priorities," said SEHHB Interim Dean Paul Rose, PhD. "We want our students to have powerful hands-on learning experiences, and we also want to add value to the communities in our region. We are grateful that the Edwardsville Community Foundation has made these screenings possible."

"Hearing is fundamental to developing communication skills," said Kim Ott, CCC/A, AUD, clinic supervisor and adjunct faculty member. "Through this outreach, we are able to offer services to individuals of all ages, including those who are underserved or might not otherwise pay attention to their hearing ability."

The high impact community engagement practice also fulfilled program requirements for the student clinicians and offered them opportunities to enhance their clinical skills.

"I like helping people and making a lasting impact," said Jenee' Brown, a second-year graduate student from O'Fallon, Ill. "SIUE's program is excellent. The faculty is involved and always there for support."

“It’s neat to be able to offer services like this that make an impact on people’s lives,” added second-year graduate student Courtney Turner, of Trenton. “I originally got my degree in business administration, and then my son started having speech issues. As I worked with therapists and figured out how I could best help him, I fell in love with the difference that can be made in this profession.”

After the brief hearing screening, participants were provided a copy of their results. Those who passed were given earplugs and information on hearing protection. Others left with a list of local resources they could contact for further testing and care.

For more information on SIUE’s speech-language pathology program, visit siue.edu/grad/slp.

The [SIUE School of Education, Health and Human Behavior](https://siue.edu/school-of-education-health-and-human-behavior) prepares students in a wide range of fields including public health, exercise science, nutrition, instructional technology, psychology, speech-language pathology and audiology, educational administration, and teaching. Faculty members engage in leading-edge research, which enhances teaching and enriches the educational experience. The School supports the community through on-campus clinics, outreach to children and families, and a focused commitment to enhancing individual lives across the region.