



## Little Lydia: a true story of victory over hearing loss

Lydia was a 10-month-old Chinese orphan when she was first adopted by a couple in the United States. Over the next 20 months, Lydia exhibited some speech errors and unexplained behavioral problems. For unknown reasons, the adoptive parents gave up their parental rights to the little girl at age 2-1/2. This proved to be a blessing in disguise.

### The gift of a lifetime

Soon, Lydia received the gift of a lifetime: a new and loving family. Her adoptive mother and father were hard-working and proactive with a young son. At long last, Lydia would be medically evaluated. A hearing test by an audiologist uncovered mild to moderate hearing loss in both ears, probably present from birth. A second opinion from Children's Hospital confirmed the audiologist's diagnosis, and they arranged for earmolds and loaner hearing instruments. Now, at 3-1/2 years old, Lydia was connected to her world and finally on the path toward a secure, happy future.

### Sound Beginnings program provides assistance

A friend of Lydia's family, who happened to work with Siemens Hearing Instruments, Inc., in the Midwest,

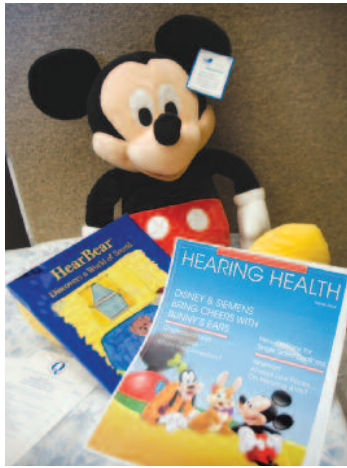
knew that the financial burden of the physicians and on-going treatments would be a real challenge. Ultimately, the family was directed to the Sound Beginnings Program operated by Quota International's We Share Foundation in Washington, D.C. Sound Beginnings was established to ensure that all children are screened for hearing loss and receive the proper treatment. The We Share Foundation in partnership with Siemens Hearing Instruments, Inc., provides permanent hearing aids for children with hearing loss from disadvantaged families. Lydia's family applied for acceptance to the Sound Beginnings Hearing Aid Program.

With the assistance of a Quota member, Lydia's family evaluated their financial situation in light of all the expenses of supporting an adoptive daughter with hearing loss, the cost of speech and language therapy to make up for lost time, the costs of behavioral therapy, the expenses of their son, plus the time all of

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A Lesson in Hearing Awareness

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During the Siemens/Quota International event in metro Denver, a goodie bag including educational materials about hearing was distributed to the children who received free hearing instruments from last year's program.

## Children and hearing loss

- Today, up to 3 out of each 1,000 babies born in the U.S. have hearing loss.
- The number rises to 17 out of 1,000 by the time they reach age 18.
- 12% of children under the age of 18 with hearing loss use hearing aids, according to a Better Hearing Institute study.
- The study also revealed that many parents today either don't recognize their child's hearing problem, minimize it, or have been given misinformation about successful treatment.
- At least 50% of parents don't go back for detailed testing when their infant fails an initial hearing screening.

To download a copy of the study, visit the BHI website at [www.betterhearing.org](http://www.betterhearing.org)

this took from their lives and earning power. Based on this realistic view of their financial future, Quota quickly accepted them into the Sound Beginnings program.

Now, Lydia's parents look back on her behavior and events that took place and see that her hearing loss played a major role. Undiagnosed, her behavior and odd speech errors seemed a mystery. But in light of the discovery of her mild to moderate hearing loss, many things were explained and they realize now that Lydia was a happy, cheerful, and bright child who had been reacting based upon what she heard...and didn't hear.

How did Lydia go so long without being directed to a professional? Very often, people, parents, and professionals make assumptions—if they see a child hear and respond to a spoken word once, they assume the child can hear and will always respond. So if there are problems, it must be the child's "fault" or some other cause. In Lydia's case, it took over three years and two adoptive families to recognize her problem and do the right thing for her, sparing her a life of potential underachievement.

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