

# ABOVE & BEYOND THE CALL

HEART MOUNTAIN HEARING CENTER GOES ALL OUT TO HELP THOSE NEEDING HEARING AIDS

BY MIKE BUHLER  
Tribune Community Editor

Chris Pelletier has worn hearing aids since the age of 12 — and he remembers how hard it was on his family to purchase those hearing aids.

"... It took a lot for them to be able to do that," said Pelletier, who is a hearing instrument specialist and owner of Heart Mountain Hearing Center in Ralston.

Perhaps that is why Pelletier and the staff at Heart Mountain Hearing have made such a strong commitment to making sure that any person needing hearing aids is able to get them. Over the last few years, Pelletier said that Heart Mountain Hearing has helped nearly 2,000 patients — and more than 300 of those Heart Mountain Hearing has helped by working with the Starkey Hearing Foundation.

Joining Pelletier on staff at Heart Mountain Hearing are Angelena Kalt, a hearing instrument specialist; Willie Marcus, patient care coordinator; Jacci Vaiskuskas, administrative assistant; and Maggie the Fox Terrier, patient care buddy.

"In my office, we have one goal: That everybody that comes in to see us gets help," Pelletier said. "Myself and my crew, we all know that we do whatever it takes to help somebody, whether it be with the Starkey Hearing Foundation through the Hear Now program that they have, we try to keep in stock a good amount of used or reconditioned hearing aids that are new tech, not 5-10 year-old stuff, then we have other ways to help. But if someone comes to see us and they want help, we're going to find a way to make it work."

Pelletier said there aren't as many options for lower-income individuals needing hearing aids as there are for other needs.

"Since I've been in the industry, I've seen so many people need help, and they don't have the resources," Pelletier said. "Medicare will pay for lots of other things, but they don't do anything for hearing. The Lions Club helps with glasses, which is great there's resources like that — but for the people that need help with hearing, there isn't anything."

That is one reason that Pelletier and Heart Mountain Hearing work extensively with the Starkey Hearing Foundation, which was founded in 1984. The Starkey Hearing Foundation provides free hearing care to people and works actively in more than 100 countries. In 2017 alone, the foundation provided more than 120,000 hearing aids and 250,000 hearing health care services at no cost to those in need.

"Hearing is such an important part," Pelletier said. "People think, 'Oh, I can go without my hearing' — but when you can't hear, you can't communicate. You lose that voice of your child. You lose the voice of your grandkids. Going into to communicate to somebody becomes very difficult. For us to be able to give that back to somebody — to give them that opportunity — is awesome."

The Starkey Hearing Foundation is an outgrowth of Starkey Hearing Technologies. William F. Austin launched the foundation in 1984 to formalize the philanthropic efforts of Starkey Hearing Technologies. The foundation's premise is "Alone we can't do much. Together we can change the world."

The Starkey Hearing Foundation made a commitment in 2010 to the Clinton Global Initiative — which was founded by former President Bill Clinton — to provide 1 million hearing aids this decade, a goal that the foundation has already met with more than a year to spare. The Hear Now Foundation is the United States' division of the foundation.

"It is a charity dedicated just to helping people get better hearing," Pelletier said.

Heart Mountain Hearing works with the Starkey Hearing Foundation and Hear Now Foundation to help those who can't afford to purchase hearing

aids still be able to obtain them. If a patient qualifies financially for assistance, Starkey Hearing Foundation will donate hearing aids to the patient.

Pelletier said that the foundation's hearing aids are latest technology and are "top of the line quality." "Between the [Starkey] Hearing Foundation and my office, we're helping people hear better," Pelletier said.

However, there are still some who have hearing issues that do not receive help.

"There's a lot of people out there that just don't call," Pelletier said. "They don't come to see us. They know they need help and they're frustrated because they can't hear — and they don't realize that we have resources to help."

That is one reason that Heart Mountain Hearing is making an extra push in September — and especially the week of Sept. 17-21 — to reach out and to help those with hearing needs. Last September, Heart Mountain Hearing was able to provide 30 hearing aids to 15 people during that week.

"It doesn't seem like a lot, but to the 15 people, it seems like everything," Pelletier said. "This year, we hope to double that. We'd like to do 60 hearing aids in that week and build up."

During the week of Sept. 17-21, Heart Mountain Hearing will be doing free hearing testing as part of its outreach efforts.

"Everything is going to be complimentary for them," Pelletier said.

However, while the week of Sept. 17-21 is a key week in Heart Mountain Hearing's quest to help those with hearing issues, he emphasizes that Heart Mountain Hearing's efforts are not limited to that week.

"We don't just do this [that] week," Pelletier said.



**Chris Pelletier**  
Hearing Instrument  
Specialist, Owner

**IF YOU HAVE TROUBLES WITH YOUR HEARING BUT CAN'T AFFORD THE HELP... CALL HEART MOUNTAIN HEARING.**



**WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE STARKEY HEARING FOUNDATION, WE'RE ON A "MISSION" TO HELP EVERYONE IN THE THE BIG HORN BASIN HEAR BETTER.**

If you or someone you know needs help with their hearing, but are restricted due to costs, we are HEAR to help.

During the week of September 17th we'll be offering complimentary hearing tests and demonstrations. If you find you need help but cannot afford hearing aids, Heart Mountain Hearing will work with the Starkey Hearing Foundation and Hands Across the Saddle to provide NEW top quality hearing aids to all in need.

*This is our second annual "Big Horn Basin Hearing Mission"*

**Heart Mountain**  
Hearing Center

**CALL TODAY**  
FOR MORE INFORMATION AND  
TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT  
**MONDAY, SEPT. 17 THRU**  
**FRIDAY, SEPT. 21**  
**754-3464**

557 MAIN STREET, BOX 721 | RALSTON, WY 82440  
(307) 754-3464 | [www.heartmountainhearing.com](http://www.heartmountainhearing.com) |