

**Letter to the Editor submission for The Kansas City Star
By Steven Murphy**



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As I See It

Thanks to *The Kansas City Star* for the recent articles on hearing loss awareness, including the March 2 “Technology poised to create a deaf generation.”

Sertoma, the nation’s third oldest civic organization, is headquartered in Kansas City, Mo., where it was founded in 1912. Speech and hearing concerns were adopted as Sertoma’s main emphasis in 1963.

It is gratifying to see significant national and local media attention given to noise-induced hearing loss awareness and prevention. Hearing loss is “getting younger” all the time. Specialists see more people in their 30s and 40s — many of them among the first Walkman users — suffering from more pronounced tinnitus, an internal ringing, or even the sound of buzzing or whooshing in the ears.

On a national level, Sertoma provides more funds for graduate-level study in communicative disorders than any other single organization. Last year we introduced our **SAFE**Ears!© hearing loss awareness program, resulting in the education of more than 250,000 individuals about how to protect their hearing.

Local Sertoma clubs increase public awareness of hearing loss and fund related programs and organizations. Current projects include equipment purchases at Children’s Mercy Hospital, KU Medical Center, Shawnee Mission Medical Center, Midwest Ear Institute, the North Kansas City school district, and the Kansas School for the Deaf; funding scholarships for speech pathology and audiology at Kansas University; providing sign language interpreters at Shawnee’s Theatre in the Park; collecting used hearing aids to be reconditioned and distributed to low-income recipients; conducting baseball camps for special needs children; and more.

This commitment to local needs is shared by our clubs across the nation. Sertomans perform hearing screenings and fund speech and hearing centers, scholarships, hearing aids, sign language interpreters, summer and sports camps for hard of hearing and deaf children, and speech therapy programs in public schools.

Sertoma hopes that, if we are diligent in educating our communities about prevention of noise-induced hearing loss, it will become a thing of the past.

We invite the public and the media to learn more about Sertoma and its communicative disorders programs by visiting sertoma.org or calling 816-333-8300. The public is welcome at our club meetings, and headquarters staff and local volunteers are available to speak to various organizations.

Steven Murphy
Sertoma Executive Director

Steven Murphy, an Overland Park resident, is executive director of Sertoma, whose primary service project is assisting the more than 50 million people with speech, hearing and language disorders. Sertoma also sponsors community projects to promote freedom and democracy, to assist youth, and to benefit a variety of other local community needs, as identified by the individual clubs.