

Affordable Hearing Aid...from Page 1A

complete loss, and that if we were going to have any continuity of care for our patients, we needed to find something quickly,” Company President Dr. Robert Morrison said. “We wanted to find something in Blairsville because we’ve been there for going on 10 years and feel a great sense of responsibility and commitment to our patients and the trust they’ve placed in us to manage their hearing healthcare.”

Within days, company CEO Asaf Peled was in town scouting new locations, while temporarily running the Blairsville operation out of the Hiawassee office.

Fortunately, the company found a site in Suite #5 of 178 Bracketts Way, outfitting the place in record time with equipment as well as construction to make the site more conducive to health care, and the business began seeing patients again in Blairsville within a month of the fire.

“We never actually broke continuity of care and service to our patients, which I thought was remarkable under the circumstances,” Morrison said.

Affordable Hearing Aid Solutions is all settled in now, so to celebrate the achievement and thank everyone for their patience and support during this ordeal, the office held a formal Grand Re-Opening Jan. 20 to recognize its employees, their patients and longtime commitment to the area.

“It’s also letting people know we’re still here for them during these unprecedented times,” Morrison said. “We used to have the big billboard right over the building that showed Affordable Hearing Aid Solutions right below. Had they seen the building quarantined off, we didn’t want them to think we were unable to remain in business as a result of the fire.

“So, this is just a more formal way of saying, ‘Hey, we are still here to serve you.’ Throughout a pandemic, throughout an office burning down, we’re here to stay. We feel very blessed to have such a loyal patient base, dedicated and caring employees, and an entire community that has stuck with us through a very difficult time.”

And local individuals, businesses and groups have really come through in showing support for Affordable Hearing Aid Solutions as the office worked hard to get back on its feet.

“The response from the community has been great,” Blairsville Patient Care Coordinator Marie Davis said.

“I reached out to the Chamber of Commerce when this happened the following morning ... and they were phenomenal (in helping us find a new location).

“Our (Greystone and Bracketts Way) neighbors have been wonderful, taking packages for us (while we were getting set up).”

Also new to Affordable Hearing Aid Solutions is Hearing Aid Provider Brian Jolley, who is happy to be serving the people of the area for all their hearing health needs.

Jolley said hearing health should be addressed as part of people’s routine health checkups, and that senior citizens especially should take advantage of the company’s free screening to see if hearing loss, which can be irreversible if it goes too long without correction, is a problem.

“We’re trying to get people to come in sooner rather than later, when they should first start wearing hearing aids, so we can maintain their speech understanding capabilities and improve audibility for them,” Jolley said, reiterating the business’ no-obligation-to-buy hearing aid policy.

Hearing loss tends to get worse over time and can become harder to reverse if ignored and has even been linked to the onset of dementia and the presence of tumors, Jolley said, leading to major health issues that could potentially have been avoided if only hearing had been assessed.

“If you haven’t had your hearing checked in the past three years, you should come get a free (15-minute) screening,” Jolley said. “There are some underlying medical issues that can be caught on a hearing screen that have nothing to do with needing hearing aids.”

There are other negative side effects of hearing loss, including ostracization from family and friends who have a hard time communicating with hearing loss sufferers, and vice versa.

Thankfully, having professionals address hearing problems can help people reconnect with their loved ones and live a life of connectivity instead of a life of isolation, which is Hear Again America’s goal as a company.

Isolation has been an even greater problem in the age of COVID-19, as many seniors find themselves cut off from society in the name of protecting them from the virus. And this kind of societal isolation is only made worse for

people having trouble hearing.

That’s where Affordable Hearing Aid Solutions comes in, which has made sure to create an office environment that’s safe in the pandemic, with staff implementing new protocols like curbside and mail-in services, increased sanitation efforts, and mask wearing in the building.

Of course, society-wide masking has presented yet another challenge to the hearing impaired, many of whom rely on lipreading and unmuffled, clear speech to understand what people are saying.

But hearing loss sufferers should know there are innovative hearing aid technologies to help with this problem and others, according to Hear Again America’s Director of Corporate Events John Moore, who traveled up from corporate headquarters in Florida to attend the Grand Re-Opening.

“The three main causes of hearing loss are aging, heredity and noise exposure,” Moore said. “People that have a mom, dad, a grandma or grandpa with hearing loss, they’ve got a higher-than-average likelihood of developing it.

“So, the important thing to do is, when people hit about 55, get a baseline of your hearing, even though it may be working beautifully now. That way, if you begin to have problems three, four years down the road, we can compare it, know how quickly it’s moving, and get a better timeline.”

Moore loves interacting with patients at the various offices he visits, as well as local office staff, including Tammy Evans, who came over from the Towns County office to be there for the celebration.

Evans is the patient care coordinator of The Hearing Aid Place in Hiawassee, another division of Hear Again America, and she has noticed that many of their patients are yearning for connection, especially since they’ve gotten their hearing back but have less interaction than ever due to COVID.

“They can hear now on the phone, but they’re not getting out and about, and people are not visiting one another anymore,” Evans said. “The grandkids or the adult children aren’t coming to visit for Sunday dinner every week anymore because they’re protecting each other.

“So, when we do our confirmation calls, a lot of the times I’ll just lean back in my chair, because a call that could

take one to two minutes to make, sometimes it’ll take 15, 20 minutes. They’ll just talk and talk, because they enjoy the opportunity to interact.

“They’re not getting as many visits; they’re not getting out and about or going to the Senior Center. They may get a couple of calls a day, and that’s all their interaction for the day, so they really enjoy calling us. And we will talk to them until they’re done talking.”

Also attending the Grand Re-Opening, which featured refreshments for guests, was Louise “Hot Mama” Wilson, who relishes her visits as a patient. Wilson is 87 years old and feels like she gained a new lease on life when she started wearing hearing aids about eight years ago.

“It used to aggravate me to no end to have to say, ‘What did you say?’” Wilson said. “In other words, people would talk to me, I could hear them, but it wasn’t clear, and I had to have it repeated. I hated that; I really did.”

For more information on Affordable Hearing Aid Solutions, including how to schedule a free appointment or take an online hearing test, visit <https://hearagainamerica.com>.

****Editor’s Note: The cause of the Sept. 28, 2020, fire at Greystone is still under investigation, according to the latest information from the State Fire Marshal’s Office, though no foul play is suspected in the blaze.*