

Audio Reality for quicker, more accurate hearing instrument programming

Gulf Gate Hearing Aid Center

Kay Press, BC-HIS • Mark Rahman, BC-HIS • Andrea McCabe, HIS

Popular radio show host Charlie Shoe is the “Morning Mayor” on WCVU (Sea View) 104.9FM, as well as a cable television talk show host. He generally keeps an ear open for his community’s scuttlebutt, and when he realized that lowered hearing was keeping him from learning about everything he needed to know about the area, Charlie paid a visit to Gulf Gate Hearing Aid Center.

“My physician referred me to Gulf Gate,” says Charlie. “Anything involving hearing or eye-sight is so important,” he points out. “I wanted to find a hearing specialist who has a good working relationship with the medical community, and my doctor helped me find that at Gulf Gate Hearing Aid Center.”

At Gulf Gate, Mark Rahman and Kay Press fit Charlie with on-the-ear instruments that couldn’t be matched at the time for comfort and performance.

“I loved those instruments,” says Charlie. “They restored sounds to me that I hadn’t heard in 10 years. Imagine my surprise in July, then, when Mark told me about new instruments that

are even more advanced, with a revolutionary new way of fitting the instruments that would help customize them to my exact listening preferences.”

Added advances

“In the past,” informs Mark, “even the best hearing instruments sometimes caused difficulties for hearing instrument users in three specific areas: feedback, background noise, and telephone conversations. The advent of modern digital hearing instruments improved comfort in all three areas, and now there is an instrument guaranteed to be free of feedback. It is equipped with directional microphones that are sensitive enough to catch even subtle sounds without amplifying unnecessary background noise. And its filters effectively eliminate static to improve clarity for sound processed through the telephone.

“The instruments I suggested to Charlie provide him with all these benefits, along with instant environmental recognition and seamless program switching, which help restore the enjoy-

ment of virtually natural sound — all without requiring the instrument user to fumble with a remote control to select the desired listening program.

“This instrument’s automated features provide the most realistic response ever available in a hearing instrument, something long-time instrument users will appreciate.”

Another benefit of this advanced instrument is that it is so easily fitted to a patient’s specific needs that it requires fewer office visits to fine tune its settings. This translates into more time for Mark to spend with his patients when they do come in and more time to help new patients find the hearing correction that is right for them.

But wait ...

“There’s more,” Mark promises.

“Gulf Gate Hearing Aid Center now offers a new fitting tool, Audio Reality, that provides a real-life approach to fitting the right hearing instrument for each patient.”

Mark explains that one of the biggest challenges to providing patients with the most natural hearing correction is being able to simulate real-life settings in the testing office.

“Traditional fittings rely on the instrument user telling us if the sound seems more or less natural at different settings in the hearing specialist’s testing office,” describes Mark. “The problem with that approach is that it doesn’t include all the visual and auditory distractions that can affect a person’s ability to listen to conversation. Such an artificial environment during instrument fitting can’t provide the best possible programming the first time. Patients then are disappointed when their new hearing instruments fail to deliver the same quality of sound that they provided in the structured office setting.

“We’ve met this challenge with Audio Reality,” says Mark. “This fitting tool simulates real-life environments, allowing patients to experience their instruments’ performance in settings as diverse as a busy restaurant, a moving vehicle, and quiet conversations at home. These are the settings that we find require the most

adjustment as we fine tune an instrument’s programming. As patients become accustomed to taking advantage of this unique tool, we will be able to offer other simulated environments as well.”

Audio Reality is a multisensory experience, delivered in a room at Gulf Gate Hearing Aid Center dedicated for its use. By carefully evaluating a patient’s responses in a variety of settings, the hearing specialists at Gulf Gate Hearing Aid Center use Audio Reality to carefully sculpt hearing correction that is uniquely right for each patient.

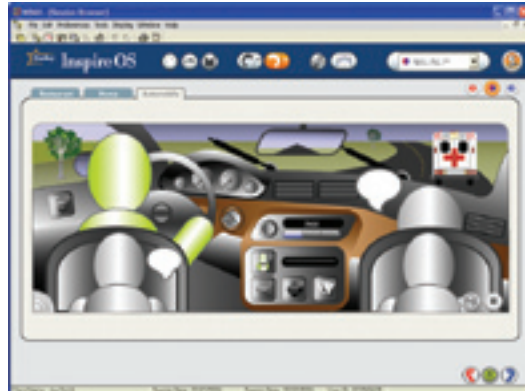
“The beauty of Audio Reality is that it can be used to help us program any hearing instrument, no matter how old, not just today’s most advanced models,” adds Mark.

Mark used Audio Reality to help him program Charlie’s new instruments.

“This was like no fitting session I’d ever experienced before,” remarks Charlie.

“The session takes about 20 minutes to half an hour. I was seated in front of a 37-inch plasma television screen with surround-sound speakers providing

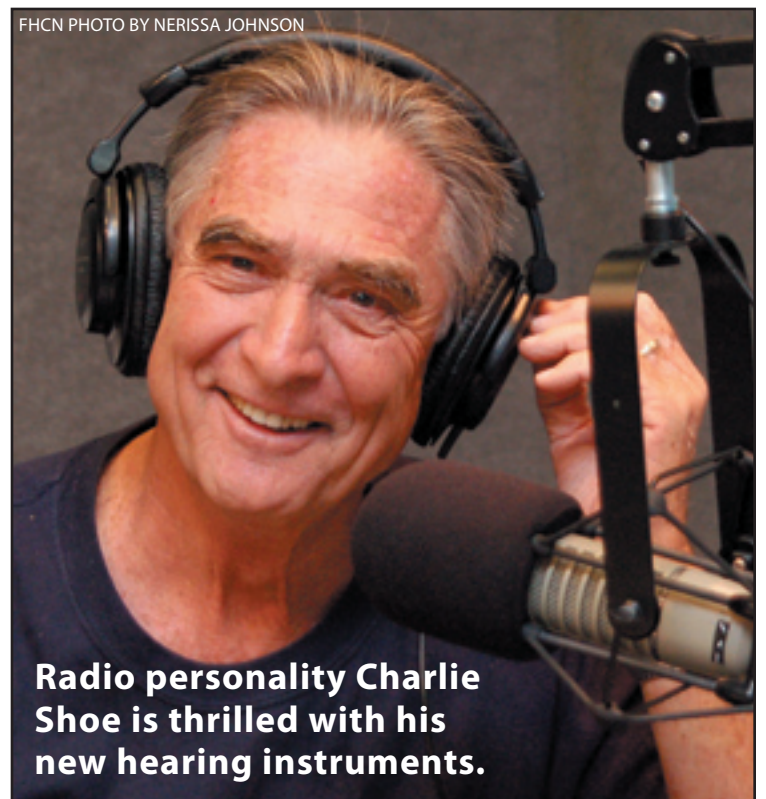
PHOTOS COURTESY OF STARKEY



all the sounds that normally accompany whatever environment is shown on the screen.

“Then, with my hearing instruments in place, the instruments’ settings were manipulated while I watched the screen and told Mark when the sounds I want to hear were most clear for me. Adding the visual distraction really helps,” adds Charlie, “because not everyone is affected in the same way by the same stimuli.”

Mark points out that other fitting methods rely on the patient being able to remember and describe the real-life situations that are particularly



FHCN PHOTO BY NERISSA JOHNSON
Radio personality Charlie Shoe is thrilled with his new hearing instruments.

challenging to listening and understanding. Then, the fitting specialist has to adjust the fitting based on his or her interpretation of that description.

“It was easy for me to see that the Audio Reality approach eliminates the miscommunication that plagued earlier fitting approaches. I felt it was able to accurately reproduce the hearing environments that are most challenging for me, and it helped Mark determine the instrument settings that would overcome those challenges.

“Hearing is very personal,” Charlie emphasizes, “so I’m sure there will still be some minor adjustments in the fitting of even the most advanced hearing instruments. But since being fit using Audio Reality, I’ve found that I can cope better with noises in restaurants now, and I am sure that this fitting method will reduce the number of adjustments

Struggling with your hearing instruments?

The staff at Gulf Gate Hearing Aid Center welcome the opportunity to help you achieve your best hearing correction. They offer hearing evaluations, instrument fitting and dispensing services, and instrument maintenance and repair. Please contact Kay Press, BC-HIS, for a complimentary consultation that includes establishment of a baseline audiogram.

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someone will need before achieving their most comfortable, most natural hearing possible.

“It’s a great idea!”

FHCN—Billie S. Noakes

CHANGING ENVIRONMENTS require different approaches to programming a patient’s instruments. Audio Reality offers several platforms simulating a ride in an automobile, a meal in a restaurant, and a quiet conversation at home.

I’m interested in a complimentary demonstration of Audio Reality. Please contact me.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Daytime Phone _____

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