

# Community Chest Chat

## THE TOLEDO LEAGUE FOR THE HARD OF HEARING

**QUESTION:** What is the Toledo League for the Hard of Hearing?

**ANSWER:** It is a place where anyone with an acquired hearing loss may go for help in adjusting to that loss.

**QUESTION:** What is meant by "acquired" hearing loss?

**ANSWER:** An impairment which comes after one has been born with normal hearing, as differentiated from deafness at birth.

**QUESTION:** Why should persons who acquire deafness in varying degrees need help.

**ANSWER:** Because loss of hearing is one of the, if not the most difficult physical handicaps to accept for the reason that there is no visible evidence of a handicap. Therefore, the sympathy and patience of others are not aroused, as they are with the blind and the near-blind or with those whose movements are hampered by crippled arms or legs. On the contrary, most people become irritated or annoyed when they are misunderstood or receive no replies to their questions.

The result is that the person whose hearing is slipping retreats behind a wall of reserve, hurt feelings, suspicion, and a feeling of inferiority is developed. Practically every person reacts in this way, whether he is the victim of industrial deafness, inherited deafness, or that caused by illness; and whether he is rich or poor.

With the right kind of help he can go THROUGH that period, not become caught in it to remain unhappy and bitter.

To furnish that right kind of help is one of the functions of the Toledo League for the Hard of Hearing.

The help is varied. It includes free lip reading classes, hearing tests, vocational guidance, advice on hearing aids, help in securing employment, social contacts, lectures and movies through group hearing aids, and last, but not least by any means, sympathetic understanding of and willingness to listen to the pent up grievances and problems—to be a safety valve, as it were.

Briefly, that is its function in rehabilitation. But even more important is its work for the prevention of deafness. This is done by hearing tests of children, individual and school tests.

Ear specialists now know that a high per cent of adult deafness had its beginning in childhood, unnoticed because it had not reached the speech range. So, to prevent deafness in later life it is necessary to find those losses in childhood through the use of special testing machines, called audiometers, and to follow that with the necessary medical or surgical care.

At the same time the League carries on an educational program to acquaint the public, families, teachers, bosses, friends, with a true understanding of the problems and advantages that accompany a hearing loss.

The Toledo League is one of the pioneers in this field, being Chapter No. 5 of the American Hearing Society, the national pioneer organization in this field, and unique in that it is the only organization doing social welfare work for a handicapped group which was organized by those so handicapped themselves.

The Toledo League started its work twenty-eight years ago. For twenty-five of those twenty-eight years it has been an agency of the Community Chest, which makes it a charter member of the Red Feather Services.

It welcomes visitors as well as those who need its services.

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Union Leader

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