



**DALLAS ARBORETUM**  
**AND BOTANICAL GARDEN**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Dallas Arboretum Launches Hear Us Now™ Technology on Trams and in  
Rory Meyers Children’s Adventure Garden to Help Children and Adults  
Hear Clearly**

**DALLAS, Texas, February 28, 2020** – To enhance the Dallas Blooms theme of “Sounds of Spring,” Dallas Arboretum has teamed up with Hear Us Now™ Technology for hearing assistance, to offer a better listening experience for guests taking a tram tour of the gardens and for children conducting experiments at the Rory Meyers Children’s Adventure Garden. For those needing extra help to hear the tour guide in the 66-acre garden, the Arboretum offers a Hearing Assist Tram with tours available daily from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. based on availability. At the Plant Lab at the Children’s Adventure Garden, children and adults can better hear the instructions of the teacher-educator and learn how to conduct hands-on science experiments. The technology is also utilized in the OmniGlobe theater where the presenter’s sound is enhanced for hearing impaired class students to hear the presentation.

According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, about 15% of American adults, or 37.5 million people, have some type of trouble hearing. Two to three out of every 1,000 children in the U.S. are born with some type of hearing loss.\*

The “Hear Us Now”™ Technology is the result of the efforts of Barry Epstein, an Arboretum board member and originator of the basic “Hear Us Now” Technology, and Ryan Knox of Idibri Consulting, whose technical advice and efforts contributed to the successful implementation of this innovative technology. This innovative technology transmits the sound from a presenter into headphones or directly into hearing aids or a user’s ear via a headset and reduces typical acoustic issues (noise, echoes, reverberation), thus making it the solution for cultural institutions, concert halls and worship centers.

Epstein developed this technology when he was approached by his friend and past chairman of the Dallas Summer Musicals who had a hard time hearing performances. Epstein said, “I was motivated to develop a way for people to hear more clearly, and it’s been revolutionary for the Dallas Summer Musicals and has been recently installed at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center. We look forward to the installation at the Dallas Arboretum where more than a million people visit, many of whom have impaired hearing.”

Epstein collaborated with nationally recognized experts including Purdue University, Idibri Consulting and the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) Callier Center for Communication Disorders—a leader in providing advanced evaluations and innovative treatments for children and adults with a variety of speech, language and hearing disorders.

An expert in this area, Linda Thibodeau, Ph.D., UTD professor, conducts research and educates graduate students in the relationship between assistive technology and healthy hearing to improve quality of life for all ages. She said, “Barry’s technology is a wonderful complement to the work we’re doing, and my students and I are able to see the effects of how technology is helping people to hear more clearly. Plus, my graduate students have been able to test the Hear Us Now™ system to help children experience the Dallas Summer Musical’s performances of “The Little Mermaid” and Aladdin” and to help the Meyerson Symphony Center with implementation.”

These UTD Doctorate of Audiology students—some with cochlear implants, others who rely on hearing aids and others who use no devices—have tested the system at the Dallas Arboretum, especially how the technology does in an open outside environment.

Thibodeau added, “The Dallas Arboretum is a major attraction, and for people to miss out on what’s being said is a travesty. It’s our responsibility to support the community with our studies and research.”

Alan Walne, Dallas Arboretum board chairman, added, “This technology will enhance the enjoyment of those visiting the Dallas Arboretum and children learning in the Rory Meyers Children’s Adventure Garden. We are thankful for the partnership with Barry Epstein, his Hear Us Now Foundation and Linda Thibodeau and her UTD students for solving a problem that many visitors face.”

### **About the Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden:**

The Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Garden is located on the southeastern shore of White Rock Lake at 8525 Garland Road, Dallas, Texas 75218 and is also the home of the internationally acclaimed Rory Meyers Children’s Adventure Garden. The garden is open daily from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. *The Dallas Morning News* is the principal partner of the Dallas Arboretum. The Arboretum is supported, in part, by funds from the Dallas Park and Recreation Department. WFAA is an official media sponsor for the Dallas Arboretum. For more information, call 214.515.6500 or visit [www.dallasarboretum.org](http://www.dallasarboretum.org).

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\*Sources:

<https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/statistics/quick-statistics-hearing>