

Hearing Campaign

Grabs Teens

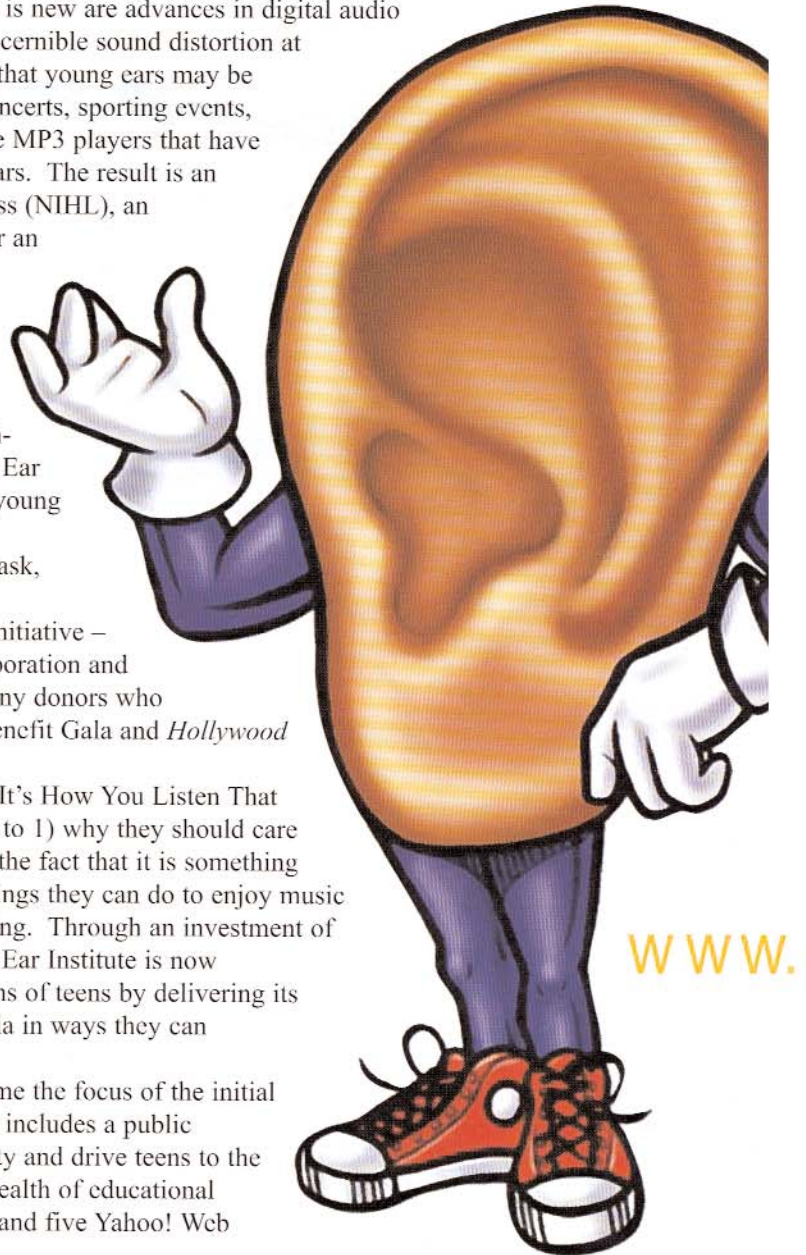
by the Ear

The fact is, teens tend to listen to music and video for too long with the volume too high. This is nothing new. What is new are advances in digital audio technology. These advances have eliminated discernible sound distortion at higher volume levels, increasing the likelihood that young ears may be exposed to dangerous decibel levels – at live concerts, sporting events, arcades, movie theaters, on stereos, and portable MP3 players that have gained widespread popularity in the last two years. The result is an increased incidence of noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL), an irreversible condition that presently accounts for an estimated 30% of all hearing loss in the U.S. NIHL is on the rise and expected to grow significantly in the near future.

Talking to teenagers about hearing health issues is a major challenge. Therefore, no entity has tackled the task of educating this high-risk group until now. It's a tall order, but House Ear Institute sees a dire need to reach this group of young music and video consumers before they incur permanent hearing damage. To accomplish the task, we've garnered extensive support from various organizations who understand the value of our initiative – the Mix Foundation, Sennheiser Electronic Corporation and Bacou-Dalloz. We've also been aided by the many donors who participated in last year's House Ear Institute Benefit Gala and *Hollywood Auction for Hearing Health*.

The recent launch of House Ear Institute's "It's How You Listen That Counts" outreach campaign is introducing teens to 1) why they should care about preventing noise-induced hearing loss, 2) the fact that it is something they actually can control, and 3) the practical things they can do to enjoy music and video in ways that won't damage their hearing. Through an investment of extensive pre-campaign market research, House Ear Institute is now tapping the unique interests and lifestyle concerns of teens by delivering its educational messages through popular teen media in ways they can appreciate and understand.

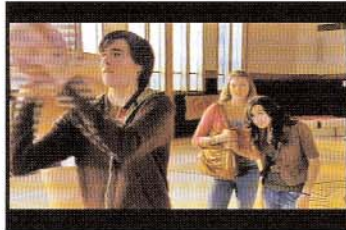
On January 16, 2006, teens in Arizona became the focus of the initial 10-month test market phase of our campaign. It includes a public service spot created specifically to pique curiosity and drive teens to the campaign Web site, www.earbud.org, where a wealth of educational material is available. MTV Network, MTV.com and five Yahoo! Web



sites including Yahoo!Music.com (aka Launch.com) are part of the campaign. The goal for our test market phase is to analyze how our outreach message impacts behavior of people between the ages of 12 and 22. This information will help the Institute confidently carry its message to a broader, nationwide audience and garner more extensive sponsorship from major corporate interests. It will also help us develop supporting programs that we can bring into public schools.

Initial response to the campaign has exceeded our expectations. National and local U.S. media covered the news, and within the first four days, traffic to our www.earbud.org site was heavy enough to warrant an immediate expansion of our server capabilities to keep up. Approximately 40% of all visitors to the campaign Web site have come from outside of Arizona, and Internet promotions have netted more than 1.9 million online impressions. Marilee Potthoff, director of marketing, HEI, points out, "It is particularly encouraging to see that the majority of young people visiting the site are requesting free hearing protection and visiting the individual educational pages for more information. We'll continue to monitor behavioral trends over the next several months as the campaign progresses." ❖

Test market public service spot



earbud.org

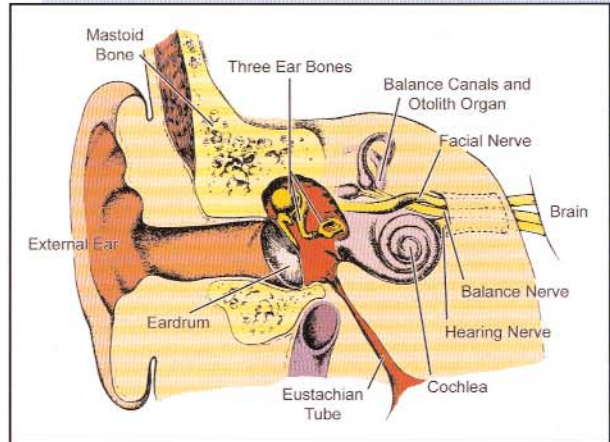
We are listening

Frequently asked questions, hearing protection and other important issues are addressed on the Web site. However, if you wish to contact the House Ear Institute for additional information or to find out how to support this campaign, please send us an email at soundpartners@hei.org.

Care to look inside?

What's happening inside your ears:

When sound, a.k.a. "acoustic energy," first enters your ear, it travels through your external ear canal to your eardrum, causing it to vibrate.



The vibration then travels along to a series of three bones in your middle ear chamber - the anvil, hammer, and stirrup.

The vibration of your middle ear bones transfers the sound energy to a small membrane that is the entrance to your inner ear.

Your inner ear contains approximately 15,000 microscopic cells ("hair cells") that respond to the incoming energy and transfer it to your brain so you can understand sound. Those 15,000 tiny hair cells are built to be tough, but they can be permanently damaged when they're blasted by extreme sound. The damage to those tiny hair cells is what causes you to lose your hearing.