

## **ABSTRACT: 2013 ELAM Institutional Action Project Poster Symposium**

### **Development of the HARP Programs: Health Awakenings Regional Programs; teaching health to the souls**

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**Background:** To recognize and appreciate the need for improved understanding and acceptance of individuals with visual and hearing impairments.

- Allow students with diverse backgrounds at specific educational stages, to be exposed to and become comfortable interacting with visual and hearing disabled individuals.
- Allow persons with visual and hearing impairments to discuss their abilities with students and gain acceptance.

**Purpose:**

This community project is to impart an appreciation of the meaning of vision and hearing to school-aged children by targeted educational experiences during three separate learning phases. The project's vision is to focus on broadening the myopic thoughts about visually impaired persons and to amplify the labyrinth view of hearing impaired persons in society.

**Approach:** Develop a self-sustaining educational program that exposes school-age children to the importance of issues surrounding vision and hearing. Initially, the program will develop its own business plan. An organization will be developed to launch the community-based project. Its mission is to create awareness about the importance of vision and hearing to children and adolescents and to expose them to the effects of vision and hearing impairment. The program is committed to development of partnerships with local, regional, and national organizations to gain acceptance of persons with visual and hearing disabilities in society. The "Eye Opening Experience" and "Hear Now" programs will be developed to work in local and regional schools aimed at the kindergarten, grade 6, and grades 10-11 levels then, expand by partnering its teaching approach with national organizations. The "Eye Opening Experience" program will expose children and adolescents to the fundamentals of sight, vision testing, corrective eyewear, eye protection, and blindness. It will also build their awareness of vision-impaired persons and how they function in society. The "Hear Now" program will deliver an educational message about hearing, hearing protection, testing, aids for impaired hearing, and deafness. It, too, will help students understand how hearing impaired persons function in society. A vital component of the program will allow persons of various ages with vision and hearing impairments to share their experiences with the students. The establishment of the programs at the local/regional levels will help to leverage national organizations to incorporate these types programs within their domain to further promote the educational message and to broaden public awareness and acceptance of persons with visual and hearing deficits.

**Outcomes:** The main outcome of the community project is to develop a self-sustaining program that will improve the understanding of vision and hearing to children and adolescents and build their awareness so that they and others will know about vision and hearing impaired persons in society. The milestones of the project are projected to be (1) develop an integral message to children and adolescents about vision and hearing that they can share with other students and adults (2) allow persons with vision and hearing impairments to share their own experiences and abilities and to dispel myths about their limitations (3) its ability to move from a local/regional pilot program and expand its outreach nationally.

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# Development of the HARP Programs: Health Awakenings Regional Programs



Marie D. Acierno, M.D. LSU Health Sciences Center  
Patricia E. Calfee Baton Rouge Area Foundation

Baton Rouge  
Area Foundation

## Purpose:

This community project is to impart an appreciation of vision and hearing to school-aged children by targeted educational experiences during three separate learning phases.

## Background:

Society does not have an appreciation for the importance of sight and hearing nor an understanding for the contributions that visually and hearing impaired people can make.

## Approach:

Students at specific educational stages will be exposed to and become comfortable interacting with visual and hearing disabled individuals.

## Eye Opening Experience Program

Provides fundamentals of sight, vision testing, corrective eyewear, eye protection, and blindness.

## Hear Now Program

Delivers an educational message about hearing, hearing protection, testing, aids for impaired hearing, and deafness.

Both programs will target kindergarten, grade 6, and grade 10-11 levels. A vital component of each program will offer persons of various ages with vision and hearing impairments to share their experiences with the students.

## Vision

*Our mission is to create awareness about the importance of vision and hearing to children and adolescents and to expose them to the effects of vision and hearing impairment.*



## Outcomes:

To develop a self-sustaining program that will improve the children's and adolescents' understanding of vision and hearing. We will build their awareness so that they will understand how vision and hearing impaired persons function in society.

## Discussion:

A business plan to secure funding and anchor the organization as a pilot program at the local/regional level. Involvement of medical students, visually and hearing impaired students, and members of the visually and hearing impaired community to participate in the program.

## Conclusions (Next Steps)

- Develop an integral message for children and adolescents about vision and hearing that they can share with others.
- Allow persons with vision and hearing impairments to share their own experiences and abilities to dispel myths about their limitations.
- Develop a local/regional pilot program and expand its outreach nationally.



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