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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Audiologists promote hearing tests for Better Hearing and Speech Month

MONTGOMERY- Eight-year-old Donald Steele used to constantly ask people to repeat what they were saying, turn the TV volume excessively high and do poorly in school.

Now, thanks to Children's Rehabilitation Service (CRS), the Montgomery resident wears hearing aids, and things have changed.

"The hearing aids helped a lot," said his mother, Rekisha Steele. "He's not asking people to repeat everything, he's not saying 'huh' all of the time, and he's getting A's and B's at school."

Like Donald, more than 5 million children in the United States have a speech, language, and hearing disorder, according to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA).

May is Better Speech and Hearing Month, and CRS audiologists urge parents to have their child's hearing checked.

"Better Speech and Hearing Month raises public awareness about the importance of normal hearing in speech and language development," said Alice Sette, audiology program specialist for CRS . "Hearing loss can interfere with speech and language development and future school performance. This month promotes early identification of hearing loss."

Signs that a child may have hearing loss include:

- inconsistently responding to sound, delayed language and speech development
- unclear speech, sound is turned up on electronic equipment (radio, television, compact disc player, etc.)
- does not follow directions
- often says "huh," does not respond when called
- frequently misunderstands what is said and wants things repeated.

Parents who suspect their children have hearing loss may contact CRS at 1-800-846-3697.

CRS audiologists can evaluate, diagnose, and treat children and youth 21 years and younger who may have hearing loss.

Children's Rehabilitation Service is a division of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the state agency whose mission is to enable Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.