

FROM SOCIETY SCENE

HEY YOU—'LISTEN UP!'

A MARKETING PUBLICATION OF THE SUN-SENTINEL COMPANY

When eighth grade students went to public school in Palm Beach County last week, they got an ear full. That's because they learned about the staggering number of students who have hearing loss and how they can prevent it.

"Listen Up!, " the new book inspired by a West Palm Beach resident, was presented by eighth grade teachers beginning to educate their students on how loud sounds in their everyday lives can contribute to hearing loss in the future.

"Much like using sun block to prevent skin cancer down

the road, protecting yourself from loud noises, antibiotics and even head-traumas can greatly protect your hearing in the future," reported Kathlyn Maguire of West Palm Beach, who has suffered profound hearing loss in both ears for more than 40 years.

Maguire commissioned writer Natalie Garibian Peters to author the 86-page book which has been geared to pre-teens and teenagers to get the message out in contemporary style using, in part, blogs and personal diaries to tell the story of two high school teens both suffering hearing loss.

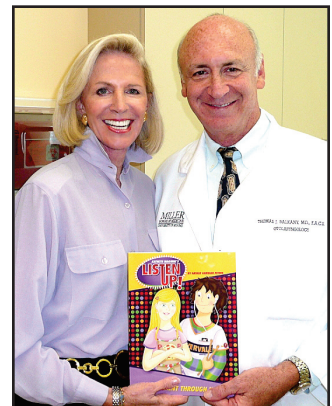
"The statistics are staggering," Maguire continued. "For every 100 students, 13 have some form of hearing loss. It's also the most prevalent chronic defect in newborns. Hearing loss is no longer a condition of aging. It can happen to anyone at any age. But every person has the ability to do something about it: By reducing noise, you can reduce hearing loss. It's that simple."

According to Dr. Thomas Balkany, Hotchkiss profes-

sor and chairman of the Ear, Nose and Throat Department as well as Professor of Neurological Surgery and Pediatrics at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, student hearing loss is a growing epidemic in 21st Century America. "Hearing loss will profoundly affect your life forever, but it can often be prevented if you know how to take precautions," he noted.

Those precautions include eliminating elevated sounds and high volume iPods and music players, close proximity to amplifiers at concerts, IV antibiotics, high-dose pain relievers, quinine or aspirin, viral infections and head traumas. All of these can cause permanent damage, noted Dr. Balkany, who conferred on the book.

"We are thrilled that 'Listen Up!' is being presented in Palm Beach County Schools this Fall, and we hope to expand that initiative to include other county schools in Florida and private schools as well," Maguire added. The book is educational yet entertaining. Filled with graphics



and amusing trivia questions, it provides young readers with a rare but realistic view into how the ear works as well as the causes and prevention of hearing loss.

Maguire is a professional communicator. As the president and founder of Empowerment Through Hearing, a 501C3 non-profit organization founded in 2004, she commissioned "Listen Up!" as a public service to eliminate the stigma associated with hearing loss.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.LISTENUPKIDS.COM

