

PRESS RELEASE
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FM System Pilot Implemented at Mill Neck Manor **Siemens Tests New Equipment at School for the Deaf**

When Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf was established in 1951, the myriad technological advances we encounter daily were likely unimaginable. As technology continues to play an ever-greater role in our lives, it's natural that the field of education has seen its share of these advances. Since its founding, Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf has been committed to enhancing the potential of its students through various means of quality education. By utilizing the latest in technology, Mill Neck strives to provide the most up-to-date programs and services available today.

Recently, Mill Neck Manor's Deaf Education Center (DEC) was selected by Siemens Corporation to test a new Frequency Modulation (FM) system the company is introducing. Simply, an FM system provides personal amplification, which can dramatically reduce background noise, thereby making it useful in a classroom setting. Helpful in this case for both hearing-impaired and hearing children, FM devices allow students to focus on their teacher's voice, rather than other sounds and distractions. With a personal FM system, the speaker's voice is picked up via an FM wireless microphone and is transmitted to the listener's ear(s). The listener wears a receiver which can be attached directly to the ear (for the hearing) or to the hearing aid or cochlear implant of someone who is Deaf.

The DEC currently has FM systems in use by all classrooms, although the specific system and further upgrades will no longer be available. The school's search for a new FM system coincided with Siemens' pilot FM program. "About a year ago, we began looking into introducing the Comfort Audio FM System to the U.S. market. The system was developed in Sweden and is the number one FM. We wanted to emphasize its use with children," said Charles Kuratko, Vice President, Business Management for Siemens Hearing Instruments, Inc., a division of Siemens Healthcare based in Piscataway, NJ. "Mill Neck Audiology already dispenses Siemens's hearing devices, so that's how we determined we'd test our new equipment at the DEC," he added.

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Siemens Corporation is a U.S. subsidiary of Siemens AG, a global entity for over 165 years in electronics and electrical engineering, with operations in the industry, energy, healthcare, and infrastructure sectors. Hearing devices have been provided by Siemens for over 100 years.

“Many schools use the Comfort Audio FM system,” said Kuratko. The day the Mill Neck pilot program went into effect, Kuratko was accompanied by Donna Grant, Manager of Siemens’ Active Kids/Teens & Wireless Program. They presented information and a training session to several DEC staff prior to installing the FM device in one of the classrooms. Kuratko explained that teachers can use various combinations of settings, thereby eliminating interference problems that can result when other devices, such as cell phones and pagers, transmit in the same frequency as the FM system. Kuratko mentioned other benefits. “This digital system offers an improved transmitter and several models that can interface with the various types of amplification children use. The systems are compatible when hooked into smartboards as well.” As several students were fitted with receivers and overall initial results deemed positive, Mill Neck Manor continues to enhance its quality programs with the most current advances available.

Mill Neck Manor School for the Deaf is a state-supported private school, located in northern Nassau County, New York. It is open to youngsters, from infancy to age 21, who are legal residents of New York State, including Long Island and the New York metropolitan area. There is no cost to families for a Deaf child to attend. Referrals are initiated by parents, clinics, physicians or school districts. Children benefit from specialized communication techniques, up-to-date curriculum and technology resources. For more information on Mill Neck’s programs and services, please contact Kathleen Kerzner, DEC Principal at 516-628-4232 or kkerzner@millneck.org.

Photo captions:

1. Teacher Assistant Sunny Genco (at right) tries out the Comfort Audio FM system with several 5th graders, as Donna Grant, Active Kids/Teens & Wireless Program Manager and Charles Kuratko, Vice President, Business Management, both of Siemens, observe.
2. Donna Grant of Siemens Corporation signals that the new FM system, worn by Mill Neck student Jacqueline Rodas, is working fine.

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