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STARKEY HEARING FOUNDATION LAUNCHES *LISTEN CAREFULLY TO HELP REVERSE HEARING LOSS TREND AMONG TEENS AND ADULTS*

Public Service Campaign Kicks Off with Starkey Hearing Foundation Listen Carefully Sweepstakes with Miley Cyrus, and Aggressive Promotion of Safe Hearing Tips

MINNEAPOLIS (April 4, 2011) – With the startling rise in teen hearing loss revealing a 31 percent increase over the past decade, the Starkey Hearing Foundation, is launching the *Listen Carefully* campaign. For the Foundation, which strives to change the social consciousness of hearing and hearing health care, the goal of the campaign is to spread the word among young people and adults to protect their hearing by lowering the volume – a simple solution with long-term impact.

The *Listen Carefully* campaign kicks-off with a series of public service ads with a clear message – “your hearing is fragile, so don’t listen loudly, listen carefully.” In addition, the campaign will include digital media activities and the Starkey Hearing Foundation *Listen Carefully* Sweepstakes with recording artist and actress Miley Cyrus, who is also making an appearance in some of campaign ads. Beginning April 4 through June 15, 2011, Miley Cyrus fans can enter the sweepstakes for a chance to win a “listening experience” with the famous singer and actress during a soundcheck, as she prepares for her performance at the Starkey Hearing Foundation’s Annual Awards Gala on July 24 in Minneapolis, which the winner will also have an opportunity to attend, along with a guest.

“As an artist, I want to make sure fans are able to experience the magic of music as it was intended,” said Cyrus. “By just lowering the volume and using the right protection for your ears, hearing loss can be prevented, which means never losing the ability to enjoy the sound of a guitar, a beautiful lyric or a favorite song.”

Miley Cyrus first became involved with the Starkey Hearing Foundation during a recent trip to Haiti, where she joined the Foundation on a mission to distribute hearing aids to those in need. During the trip, Miley learned about the *Listen Carefully* campaign and was quick to jump on board to lend her support.

”With 6.5 million teens recognized with some level of hearing loss, and those numbers growing, it is important that we put information and tools in the hands of parents and young people on how one’s hearing is fragile and needs to be protected from the amped up volumes of the personal hearing devices that are prevalent today,” said Bill Austin, Chief Executive Officer of Starkey Laboratories and Founder of the Starkey Hearing Foundation. “The majority of teen hearing loss is preventable, and it is our hope that the *Listen Carefully* campaign, with support from entertainers like Miley Cyrus, can make a difference.”

According to the Starkey Hearing Foundation, loud sounds such as music pumping through headphones and ear buds at too high a volume, have the ability to destroy the tiny hair cells in the inner ear over time. These tiny hair cells are essential in converting sound waves into messages and nerve impulses that are sent to the brain as sounds. If just 30 percent of these hair cells are damaged or destroyed, one will experience hearing loss.

For an online hearing test, tips on hearing loss prevention, and more, visit starkeyhearingfoundation.org. There, you will also find information on the *Listen Carefully* campaign and how to enter the Starkey Hearing Foundation *Listen Carefully* Sweepstakes with Miley Cyrus.

About The Starkey Hearing Foundation

The Starkey Hearing Foundation is striving to change the social consciousness of hearing and hearing loss prevention. Hearing loss affects one in 10 Americans, and 63 million children worldwide, yet many do not have access to the hearing devices that can help correct that disability. Each year, the Foundation delivers more than 100,000 hearing aids through hearing missions in countries stretching from the U.S. to Vietnam. Since 2000, the Foundation has supplied nearly 498,000 hearing aids to people in need and is striving to achieve its goal of distributing over one million free hearing aids in this decade. In addition to giving the gift of hearing, the Foundation partners with Best Buy and the GRAMMY Foundation to promote ‘safe hearing’ and hearing loss prevention among teens and young people, through its national program, **SoundMatters™**. For more information on the Starkey Hearing Foundation, visit www.starkeyhearingfoundation.org.

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