

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Bellevue Arts Museum invites patrons to be “In the Loop”

Newly installed hearing aid compatible technology makes Museum visit more enjoyable

**Bellevue, WA** – When over 36-million Americans of all ages are experiencing hearing loss, it’s time for public spaces to take action and promote hearing accessibility. Bellevue Arts Museum, the Pacific Northwest’s center for the exploration of art, craft and design, in partnership with Let’s Loop Seattle, is one of the first public venues in Washington State to be doing just that.

From now on, art lovers using a hearing aid will be “in the [hearing] loop” at Bellevue Arts Museum, thanks to the installation of an induction hearing loop in two key locations: at Guest Services, where Museum visitors are greeted, and the Auditorium, the Museum’s main space for educational and community programs, such as its popular Free First Friday Lecture. A “hearing loop” is a simple copper cable, installed around a room, which transmits sound from a microphone, electromagnetically directly to the hearing aid user’s ear. A telecoil, present in about 70 percent of hearing aids and all cochlear implants used today, wirelessly picks up that electromagnetic signal from the loop. With a simple push of a button on a hearing aid or cochlear implant, the telecoil is activated and clear sound is broadcast directly to the listener’s ear. No additional equipment is needed.

Karen Utter, President of Hearing Loss Association of Washington, describes the experience as, “Wonderful! Hearing the sounds or spoken words from the microphone using my telecoil are clear and better than any other situation because there is virtually no background noise. I hear all the words spoken very clearly. My understanding is good and I don’t get so tired from straining to understand.”

Although the loop to telecoil technology is prevalent in northern Europe, the hearing loop movement in the U.S. is just beginning.

“We’re excited to be one of the first venues in Washington State to be equipped with a hearing loop,” said Larry Wright, Managing Director of Bellevue Arts Museum. “Our ultimate goal is to loop the whole museum. Making art and museum programming accessible to everyone, regardless of barriers, is key to our mission.”

“We are thrilled to add Bellevue Arts Museum to the list of looped spaces in Washington State,” adds Cheri Perazzoli, Director of Advocacy for the Hearing Loss Association of Washington and Founder of Let’s Loop Seattle. “Hearing loops are a universal design element that promotes inclusiveness in public spaces. Many people with hearing loss stop attending meetings, performances or tours simply because they cannot understand what they hear. Counter loops can be life savers in noisy transient situations such as ticket windows or airport kiosks where critical information is exchanged. They make it possible for those of us with hearing aids and cochlear implants to involve ourselves in the community once again.”

Bellevue Arts Museum joins the list of over 16 facilities in the Puget Sound area equipped with hearing loops. “In my seven years installing loops, I have seen countless positive reactions to the system, including people in tears of joy because they can hear so easily. Many hard-of-hearing patrons hesitate to use FM or Infrared systems because of the inconvenience of having to locate, check-out, and return an assistive listening device that does not allow them to maintain use of their own hearing aid. Hearing loops eliminate all that hassle. Why would anyone install anything else?” asks Spencer Norby, owner of HearingLoop NW.

### **ABOUT LET'S LOOP SEATTLE**

Let's Loop Seattle is a public education and advocacy campaign launched by the Hearing Loss Association of Washington (HLA-WA) in cooperation with the American Academy of Audiology (AAA) and the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA). Let's Loop Seattle builds knowledge about hearing loop technology, provides information and resources to facilities and users, supports certified installations, and most importantly, strives to bring hearing loop technology to our region. These efforts ensure that residents and visitors can hear all that our greater Seattle area has to offer. For more information about the campaign, hearing loop technology, or to see a list of looped facilities, visit:

<http://www.loopseattle.org> or connect with us on Twitter (@[LetsLoopSeattle](#)) and Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/LoopSeattle>)

### **ABOUT BELLEVUE ARTS MUSEUM**

Bellevue Arts Museum is the Pacific Northwest's center for the exploration of art, craft and design. The Museum connects people of all ages with extraordinary works by Northwest artists while bringing national and international collections to its community. Dynamic educational programs provide unique opportunities to connect with art and artists; past or present, experimental or established. Each July, BAM hosts one of the largest and most treasured art festivals of the year, the Bellevue Arts Museum ARTSfair. BAM is located in the heart of downtown Bellevue, provides free parking and is wheelchair accessible. Please visit [www.bellevuearts.org](http://www.bellevuearts.org) for details.

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