

Youths and Hearing Center Help Hearing Impaired Man Gain His Hearing

By Jackie Schatell

Four Basking Ridge high school seniors: Andrew Gu, Ethan Mathas, Aryan Nagesh (formerly of Basking Ridge, and now residing in Michigan), and Nicholas Rose, run a non-profit club called the Fund for the Aid of Hearing and Vision Impairments (FAVHI) fahvi.org. Recently, they held a few fundraisers and raised and donated \$5,000 to Livingston-based Hearing Doctors of New Jersey. The money will go toward helping a man named Johnny Thomas of Newark, who cannot afford hearing aids, finally regain his hearing. Hearing Doctors of New Jersey, which is run by Founder and Doctor of Audiology, Dr. Rhee Nesson, will donate the remaining costs associated with treating Johnny's hearing loss for four years.

The boys started the non-profit after bonding over shared experiences with hearing loss. Andrew's grandfather, whom he was close to, had hearing impairments which made it hard for the two to communicate. Andrew says his impetus for starting the club "has been to help other people with hearing loss so they can communicate with friends and loved ones." Ari says his relationship with his grandfather was also strained because of his grandfather's hearing loss. Nicholas has spent time volunteering with children with hearing impairments.



HEARING DOCTORS
OF NEW JERSEY



Left to right: Ethan Mathias, Nicholas Rose, Aryan Nagesh, Andrew Gu, Dr. Rhee Nesson, and Rebecca Smith, with the \$5,000 check that was donated to Dr. Rhee Nesson of Livingston-based Hearing Doctors of New Jersey

Through the club, the members research and talk about technology and raise awareness for hearing loss. While doing some research, they were introduced to Dr. Danielle Noll from the University Hospital in Newark, who put them in touch with Johnny. They also connected with Dr. Rhee Nesson, who liked what they were doing and decided to help them with their endeavor.

To raise the money, the club organized community fundraisers and bake sales, throughout the school year, and most recently held a 5k in their community. They also provided music lessons to children. The boys also have plans to hold more fundraisers and possibly do a fundraising concert in the future. They are also expanding the club to other areas including Somerset County, Bergen County and Oakland County in Michigan, where other schools will get involved.

"I am so proud of these young men who know the importance of hearing better and I have enjoyed partnering with them," says Dr. Rhee Nesson. "Hearing loss can affect people in many ways and having the proper hearing aids can make a world of difference in being able to stay connected to friends and family."

After making the donation, the boys were "excited to speak with Johnny on the phone and tell him the good news." In turn was "thrilled to hear from them and was very thankful."

Ari says, "I feel really motivated to have met Dr. Rhee and see how the money we raised can change a person's life."

Nick says he feels "great to be able to help Johnny" and that he "looks forward to helping other people in a similar way."