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HAMILTON RELAY CUSTOMER CARE

800-618-4781
info@hamiltonrelay.com

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888-269-7477

Community Spotlight: Steven Cooper



In 2019, Steven Cooper's life changed forever. That February, Steven underwent a total laryngectomy, and less than a year later, received a Tracheoesophageal Voice Prosthesis (TEP). Since then, Steven has been a dedicated advocate for individuals in the laryngectomy and speech difficulty communities. We had the opportunity to sit down with Steven to discuss his experiences of living with speech difficulty and his use of Relay services, as well as his advocacy for Speech-to-Speech Relay service.

Speaking about the impact Relay services have had on his community, Steven shared his experience as a board member of Lary's Speakeasy, the world's largest laryngectomy support organization, with nearly 6,000 members. "Not a day goes by," he said, "that people don't complain that they tried to make a phone call and were hung up on. The person on the other end can't understand them."

Steven explained that even simple, essentials calls become barriers. "They'll call their doctor's office and be told, 'Have someone else call us back,'" he said. "Or they're told, 'We can't speak to your spouse or caregiver — we need to speak to you,' but they don't have a voice."

For Steven, the solution has been transformative. "To see what Speech-to-Speech can achieve is just amazing," he shared. "People who haven't used a phone in two years can now pick one up and make a call — to their bank, to friends." He has helped lead trial calls encouraging others with laryngectomies to try the technology, calling it "an absolute game changer."

As more people learn about Speech-to-Speech, Steven believes it's helping combat isolation. "It's the solution," he said. "We're now allowed to be heard."

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Celebrating the Next Generation

Each year, Hamilton Relay awards multiple \$1,000 scholarships to support students toward their post-secondary education. This exciting opportunity is open to graduating seniors who are deaf, hard of hearing, DeafBlind or have difficulty speaking — and who live in states where Hamilton Relay is the contracted relay or captioned telephone service provider. To apply, students submit an application and write a short essay on the impact of communication technology. It's a chance to shine, share their story and take a step toward their future!

Join us in celebrating the recipients of the 2025 Hamilton Relay High School Scholarship:

California: Lucas Gough, California School for the Deaf

Connecticut: Faith Posner, Accellus Academy

Georgia: Bartu Tunctan, Jackson County High School

Iowa: Sophia Cronk, Madrid High School

Idaho: Magdalena Stay, Renaissance High School

Kentucky: Brylee Barrett, Madison Central High School

Louisiana: Micah Brock, Bowling Green School

Maryland: Josiah Lockhart, Maryland School for the Deaf

Michigan: Kaitlyn Mills, Lakeland High School

Montana: Natalie Wilson, Columbus High School

Nebraska: Jeremiah Hajek, Leyton High School

New York: Vincent Vaillancourt, Iroquois High School

Oklahoma: Keon Sobhani, Deer Creek High School

Tennessee: Cooper Bromley, Loretto High School

Washington: Kara Glassman, Arlington High School

Wisconsin: Bennett Lehman, Jefferson High School

CUSTOMER CARE CORNER: VISUALLY ASSISTED SPEECH-TO-SPEECH

Many individuals who have difficulty speaking are best understood when they can be seen. Visually Assisted Speech-to-Speech (VA STS) provides the opportunity to use both speech and visual cues when interacting with the Communication Assistant (CA) during calls.

Visually Assisted Speech-to-Speech involves the use of a live video connection between the CA and the VA STS user. Utilizing a webcam and computer with Jami™, the CA is able to see the VA STS user's mouth movements, facial expressions and gestures as they speak. The CA uses these visual cues to assist in better understanding the VA STS user's side of the conversation.

What's Required

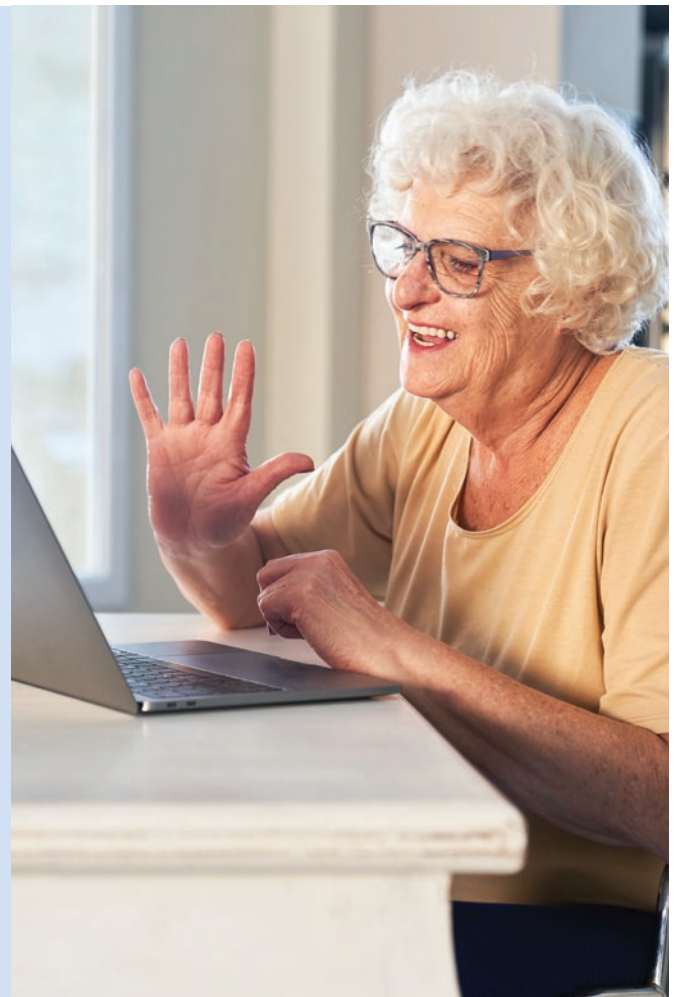
- A telephone with active service
- High-speed internet connection
- A computer and webcam
- Jami* user account

Getting Started

Contact the Speech-to-Speech User Training Line for an initial set-up call. Representatives will assist with any questions you may have about VA STS, document your call handling preferences and give you the opportunity to place practice calls.

To find out if your state offers VA STS, visit hamiltonrelay.com/state-services.

**If you do not already have a Jami user account, visit jami.net and click on "Download Jami." Follow directions to download and register. There is no cost to download Jami.*



Community Spotlight: Steven Cooper

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When asked what advice he would give to first time Relay users, Steven kept it simple. “Just make the call,” he said. “It’s not like a device where you have to learn new technology or get special equipment. It’s simply picking up the phone, dialing the number, and asking for a Speech-to-Speech operator.”

He emphasized how simple the process is. “They’ll walk you through it,” he explained. “It’s so easy — they will understand what you’re saying. Don’t be afraid.”

Steven’s story highlights more than resilience — it underscores the power of accessible communication. Through his advocacy and lived experience, he continues to show how Speech-to-Speech Relay can restore independence, connection and confidence for people with speech difficulties. As Steven reminds others who may be hesitant to try it, sometimes the most powerful step is the simplest one: “Just make the call.”

To learn more about Speech-to-Speech Relay visit HamiltonRelay.com.

Little Ears, Big Impact: Representation in Children’s Media

Children’s media plays a powerful role in shaping how kids perceive themselves and understand the world around them. Encouragingly, the entertainment industry is beginning to recognize this influence and is making meaningful strides toward greater inclusion of Deaf and Hearing Loss communities.

Spring of 2026 brought two standout moments for representation in children’s media. The first came from the BBC network, where Peppa Pig introduced hearing loss into its storyline by showing Peppa’s younger brother, George, being fitted with a hearing aid. By weaving hearing loss into the show, the episode helps normalize assistive technology while encouraging empathy from an early age. For children with hearing loss, representation like this can be affirming — reminding them they are not alone. For hearing children, it builds understanding and awareness in a natural, age-appropriate way. The episode was developed in partnership with the British National Deaf Children’s Society and premiered in early March.

Also debuting this spring, Disney Animation premiered “Songs in Sign Language” on Disney+ in late April. The project features three animated musical numbers from recent Walt Disney Animation Studios films, reimagined and newly animated in American Sign Language (ASL). The selections include “The Next Right Thing” from Frozen 2, “We Don’t Talk About Bruno” from Encanto and “Beyond” from Moana 2, all performed by eight artists from Deaf West Theatre.

Together, these efforts signal an important shift toward more inclusive storytelling — one where all children have the opportunity to see themselves reflected on screen. Representation is about more than being seen; it’s about belonging.



HAMILTON MARKS A MILESTONE

This year Hamilton Relay’s parent company, Hamilton Telecommunications, is celebrating 125 years of making connections by delivering communications, technology and accessibility that make a difference across the communities we serve.

From our roots in 1901 as an independent local exchange carrier in Hamilton County, Nebraska, we have built a legacy of steady progress and proven results. What began as a local connection has grown into a trusted local, regional and national technology service provider — positioning Hamilton as one of the leading independent telecommunications companies in the nation. As we celebrate what we’ve achieved, we’re even more energized by the opportunities ahead and the continued growth still to come.

Thank you for being an important part of our story and our success. We appreciate the trust you have in Hamilton, and we are honored that you have given us the opportunity to connect your world for more than 125 years!

To learn more about our history, visit HamiltonTel.com/125th.

SUMMER WORD SEARCH

Give your brain some exercise with a word search that highlights some of this season's newsletter topics and stories.

D A S S I S T E D U P H B S U A W A R D
 Q P W J O S C H O L A R S H I P E Y W P
 C S S W M H D I S N E Y D O J R F N L N
 T Y R C P O F Z J H O P W I R W C J D P
 E S E X I N H V K C J U E D I H L F A A
 R R G R Q I H A M I L T O N J R Q I L E
 G W H Z U F V R N M X A L X Y R R Z D W
 U U G S B S V D Q V E H C H I L D R E N
 G F X G C R O O A N N I V E R S A R Y O
 P V I S U A L L Y E Q R I P G Y S Z V Z
 D V R K G M S T E V E N W G Z V F T T C
 R U L M O T J V W T R I F L Y Y T R J J
 T Z S P E E C H I P Q H Z V S Q R K D G
 K C Y L K H A K N B S C T F N I U B M N
 B P Q F N M G T E S R A C W A F P A J Q
 N G G P T C N E O X G W S Y P B Y J Z N
 B H N W O D D L Y J U M E R O H N Z D Z
 U D T M Q L A R Y N G E C T O M E E P G
 C Q T V G T I M C B Z J Q A F G G E D U
 W J B B A N A N A C B L C B D D X E V P

STEVEN	AWARD	DISNEY
LARYNGECTOMEE	VISUALLY	HAMILTON
SPEECH	ASSISTED	ANNIVERSARY
SCHOLARSHIP	CHILDREN	BANANA



Hamilton Relay Service
 1006 12th Street
 Aurora, NE 68818

Address Service Requested

From Our Kitchen to Yours

Try this delicious treat from Hamilton Relay's own Thomas Sena. It's perfect for breakfast or dessert.



SOUR CREAM BANANA BREAD

Servings: 8 Total Time: 75 minutes Allergens: Dairy, Eggs
 Prep Time: 15 minutes Bake Time: 60 minutes

INGREDIENTS

3 1/4 cups white sugar, divided	2 tsp vanilla extract
1 tsp ground cinnamon	2 tsp ground cinnamon
3/4 cup butter	1/2 tsp salt
3 eggs	3 tsp baking soda
6 mashed overripe bananas	4 1/2 cups flour
16 oz sour cream	

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Grease four 7x3 inch loaf pans.
2. In a small bowl, stir together 1/4 cup of white sugar and 1 teaspoon cinnamon. Dust pans lightly with cinnamon and sugar mixture.
3. In a large bowl, cream butter and 3 cups sugar. Mix in eggs, mashed bananas, sour cream, vanilla and cinnamon. Mix in salt, baking soda and flour.
4. Divide into prepared pans and bake for one hour, until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.

