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NYLS Clinic Secures Patent on Technology to Help Children With Hearing Loss

Shahrokh Falati



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With Hearing Loss**

Professor Shahrokh Falati '08 • Published March 15, 2024

The Patent Law Clinic (PLC) at New York Law School (NYLS), directed by **Professor Shahrokh (Seve) Falati '08**, recently succeeded in obtaining a patent for one of their clients. **Ashley Sommer**, an inventor based out of Denver, Colorado, developed technology related to cochlear implants for children with hearing disabilities. After reviewing existing products for children with hearing disabilities, she identified a great need that the parents of these children had and created a novel solution to address it. Her efforts led her to invent a device that helps parents make sure their child's cochlear implant processors are connected without having to supervise and intervene.

Parents of young children noted many difficulties ensuring that their child's cochlear implant stayed connected, knowing that constant disconnection can negatively impact their child's brain development. Sommer's technology enables children to have uninterrupted access to sound during this critical period of development. The device enables one to secure an external transmitter of a cochlear implant to the head of the child in a novel way and for it to be adjustable for each child's unique implant location. It is compatible with both behind-the-ear and over-the-ear processors from providers such as Cochlear, MED-EL, and Advanced Bionics.

The patent application was prepared, filed, and prosecuted to overcome rejections over a 2–3 year period. Near the end of prosecution and close to the allowance of the application, the technology got the attention of a pediatric medtech accelerator called The West Coast Consortium for Technology and Innovation in Pediatrics (CTIP) based at Lurie Children's Hospital in Illinois and Children's Hospital of Los Angeles. This consortium is a pediatric medical device accelerator, comprising a network of children's hospitals, academic institutions, accelerators, and incubators spanning across eight states. Every organization in this network is devoted to the development and commercialization of new pediatric medical devices for clinical use. They have evaluated over 600 projects related to pediatric medical devices, making the selection process very competitive. Near the final stage of obtaining her patent, Sommer was accepted into the CTIP program to assist with all future aspects of the commercialization and launch of this product.

Our Patent Law Clinic is proud to have played an instrumental role in assisting in the protection of this technology and to see our client's startup, SyNAPS, LLC, become successful. With a patent now in hand, this startup company is now in the process of obtaining FDA regulatory approval with the aim of launching their product in 2025. Thank you to all those who worked on this patent file, including **John Lopez '23, Taylor Lepore '22, Kiera Latham '23, Jacob Ehrlich '23, and Maximilian Ranzato '23**; and to our administration and staff at The Plumeri Center, home to NYLS's experiential learning opportunities, for providing invaluable support for our clinic.

PLC Student, Maximilian Ranzato '23

"During my time at the Patent Law Clinic, I encountered an invaluable learning experience that has significantly enriched my understanding of patent law and practice. Under Professor Falati's mentorship, I have not only honed my skills in client communication and file management but also delved into extensive research on patent-related matters. Professor Falati's guidance has been instrumental in navigating the complexities of patent law, and his approach to teaching has made the clinic sessions engaging and enjoyable. He has a knack for simplifying intricate concepts, ensuring that all students, myself included, grasp the subject matter effectively. Moreover, the opportunity to assist clients in obtaining patents, including the cochlear implant device, has been profoundly rewarding, reaffirming the importance of intellectual property rights in fostering innovation and protecting inventors' creations."

PLC Client, Ashley Sommer

"I am very grateful to Professor Falati and the NYLS Patent Law Clinic team for all their hard work and perseverance throughout this process. As a small, self-funded business, a patent wouldn't have been possible without their help. Having patent protection gives me confidence in moving forward with commercializing the product and gets us one step closer to our goal of helping more families!"

Experiential Learning at New York Law School's Plumeri Center

Experiential learning is an integral part of the NYLS education. The Plumeri Center is NYLS's home for experiential learning, and the Center houses our many clinics, including the Asylum Clinic. Through our top-tier programs, we offer students the opportunity to turn theory into practice: Starting in their first year, students participate in counseling, interviewing, and negotiating exercises in their foundational Legal Practice course. During their upper-level years, students may select from a wide array of experiential learning courses to hone their lawyering skills. Together with a comprehensive legal education, these experiential offerings prepare our students for careers in advocacy.

Patent Law Clinic at New York Law School

The Patent Law Clinic, directed by **Professor Shahrokh (Seve) Falati '08**, is a yearlong clinic, providing 2L and 3L students an opportunity to work with entrepreneurs and practice patent law before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO).



From left to right: Danielle Marshall '25, Saoirse Moloney '24, Karel Van Bourgondien '25, Colleen McGuinness '25, Peter Vicchio '25, Sarah Glassman '24, Chase Behar '25, Hailey Kate Chatlin '25, Rey Llana '25, Timour Chamilov '24, Rosemia Chiara '25, and Stanislaw Gadek '25.