

COCHLEAR IMPLANT UNIT KOGLEÛRE INPLANTINGSEENHEID

HOSPITAAL • TYGERBERG • HOSPITAL



UNIVERSITEIT
STELLENBOSCH
UNIVERSITY



JULY 2012 NEWSLETTER • NUUSBRIEF JULIE 2012

*Stories van ons inplantingsgebruikers en hul ouers.
Hier is verkorte weergawes van hul stories. Die volledige
stories is in die foto-album in die KI Eenheid.*

1986 – 2011: TWENTY FIVE YEARS OF COCHLEAR IMPLANTATION

On the 4th November 2011 we celebrated the 25th anniversary of cochlear implantation at Tygerberg Hospital. It all started on the 4th November 1986 when the first multi-channel implant surgery in South Africa was performed at Tygerberg Hospital by Prof Derrick Wagenfeld. Our first two implantees were Rinelma Wapenaar (now Rugan) and Gerrie van Reenen.

The 25th anniversary landmark was celebrated with two events, the first on the evening of the 4th November with Mrs. Helen Zille as the guest speaker. Demi Muller and Kelly Lewis each recited a poem to open the event. To quote Mrs. Zille "the audience was enthralled by young children, born profoundly deaf, reciting poetry and talking more fluently than many of their peers. Before cochlear implant technology, these children would never have mastered spoken language. It borders on the miraculous when one considers that hearing is the only one of the five senses that human technology can now create and restore". **Infants with hearing loss have the prospect of outcomes matching those of their hearing peers provided the loss is identified early and intervention is initiated by six months of age.*

On Saturday the 5th of November the celebrations continued with a gathering of the old and new faces of the Tygerberg Hospital implantees. Hughan Pietersen (No. 34) who received his cochlear implant in 1992, and his family joined the

celebrations all the way from the UK, where they now live. The implantees, friends and family had a chance to chat and catch up, and new implantees had the opportunity to meet others in the program. We were entertained with talks by some teenager implantees and Maureen Rautenbach gave a piano recital. The day was a great celebration, a time to reflect on the past, to enjoy the present and to look forward to the future growth and developments which lie ahead.



*Demi Muller and Kelly Lewis each recited a poem.
Here they are with Mrs Helen Zille*



Implantees attending the celebration on the Saturday morning



*The team of 1986 and the first two implantees.
Lida Müller (audiologist), Gerrie van Reenen (No. 2) Prof. Derrick
Wagenfeld (surgeon) & Rinelma Wapenaar (No. 1)*



Maureen Rautenbach playing the piano.

Corban Rhoda (no. 418)

Our son is a vibrant boy and does not let anything hold him back from learning new things. We patiently followed each step of his development. He started crawling when he was 3 months and walked at 10 months of age. We then waited to hear his sweet voice say “mom”, “dad I love you”, which did not happen at the time expected.

On the 25-01-2011, our 2yr old son was diagnosed with a hearing problem. All we wanted for him was to hear, so we pleaded with various organizations, family and friends to assist us with funds for his cochlear implants. We did not want to deprive him of anything just because mom and dad did not have the money.

On 22 September 2011 Corban had his surgery. The next day we went home, and acted as if nothing had happened.

On 13 October 2011 his first processor was switched on. What an amazing day. He did not like it, but later that day his dad took him outside to the dog, his best friend, switched his processor on and from then on he accepted it. As the months passed Corban started making more different sounds. In December 2011 his second processor was fitted, once again he moved on as if it had always been there.

Corban motivates himself and is a motivation for all of us. The past six months have been a struggle for us and we try our best not to affect his wellbeing. He has after just a few months developed a vocabulary of about thirty words. He is still very shy when he needs to show the world what he can say now, and we are working on building his confidence.

This has been life changing for our family.
Linda & Cecil



Charné Morrison (no. 414)



My name is Charné Morrison, I am 32 years old, a passionate, fun loving graphic designer with profound sensorineural hearing loss which was diagnosed at the age of nine months. Once diagnosed, I always wore hearing aids. After years of hard work I've learned to speak and lip-read excellently.

The thought of having a cochlear implant never crossed my mind, even though I was hearing a lot about the latest technology and how it created a positive impact on others around me. I was not 100% sure if I really wanted my head operated on and the fear of the disappointment.

A few years ago, I read a book called "Let God Surprise You" by Heather McCallum, a deaf lady who won the Miss America title in 1995. Her story inspired me, especially chapter 13 "Surprised by Healing". She wrote about her journey after she had the cochlear implant and the thought of having one done

came into my mind. An extract from this book which made me decide to take the plunge...

"Our God is a God of healing. Sometimes He heals through miracles, sometimes He heals through medicine, and sometime He heals through both. Let God surprise you – pray for guidance, then walk through the doors He opens for you"

So I took the plunge and after extensive assessment was given the thumbs up to have a cochlear implant. I was petrified and elated at the same time but proud to have made the decision. The operation was on the 11th August 2011 and it was a success. It only required an overnight stay at the hospital. The most amazing thing was to be able to see my cochlear implant in my ear via the X-ray when I went for my first check-up.

On 8 September I received my speech processor. When my audiologist switched on the implant, the first sound I heard was TICK TOCK. At first I did not know what it was, but I knew I did hear something. It was the clock on the wall in the room. I began to hear sounds which I've never heard before with my hearing aids.

It's amazing all the things I heard for the first time; plastic bags rustling, key rings rattling, birds singing, footsteps, water running, kettle boiling, the phone ringing in the dining room all the way from the computer room. There were so many noises and I identified them very quickly. I could hear my dogs or anyone walking down the passage way. I love listening to the rain and the waves. What a noisy place the hearing world is. I even went to bed with my cochlear implant switched on because I wanted to see how hearing people sleep at night with all the ongoing noises around them. It's now been 9 months since I was switched on. I'm still learning different sounds. The journey has been very challenging, but it becomes easier with time. This has been a great achievement for me, both having a cochlear implant and conquering the challenges that having it, have given me. I have the best of both worlds.

Lihanda Smit (no. 413)



Ek ervaar elke dag die fyn en klein goed wat ek nooit tevore kon hoor nie. Paddas, voëls, babas se lag. My niggie van 5 jaar, het die naweek iets saggies in my oor gefluister. Ek was baie verbaas toe ek als kon hoor. Verder vat ek dit dag vir dag en beleef die nuwe geluide. Ek raak ook gewoon aan mense se stemme en die manier waarop hul praat. So kan ek hulle ook makliker verstaan.

Die apparaat is baie maklik om te gebruik en te hanteer. Oor die telefoon sukkel dit nog so bietjie veral met 'n Engelse persoon wat baie vinnig praat. Ek sal sommer vir iemand wat ek nie ken nie sê hulle moet stadiger praat en hoekom. Verder is ek bly oor die implanting en dat dit so 'n groot sukses is.

Aqueelah Williams (no. 432)

From the age of one, I started comparing Aqueelah to other children her age. Her speech was not clear and she did not respond to sound. Our local clinic referred her to Red Cross Children's Hospital where it was confirmed that she is hearing impaired and was fitted with hearing aids. We were also introduced to Hi Hopes. They educated us on how to live with a hearing impaired child.

The whole family got involved with helping Aqueelah cope with sound. We could see a major improvement in everything she did and she responded well to



sound. We could then freely communicate with her and she would understand. Hi Hopes then introduced us to the Carel Du Toit Centre.

She started at this school from the age of 2 years. Every day from then on we could see a huge improvement in everything she did. But her hearing started to deteriorate again about a year later. She could not understand why she could not hear, and continuously demanded that I change the hearing aid batteries. It was difficult to explain to her what was happening.

Then with the help of Tygerberg Hospital Cochlear Implant Unit she became a candidate for a cochlear implant.

On 25th November 2011, the implant was done in the right ear as the hearing in this ear was weaker than the left ear. After the operation, Aqueelah's quality of life only got better every day. Just watching her reaction when she hears a knock at the door, when the phone rings, listening to her own footsteps, etc... is priceless. We are now raising funds for the left ear as well.

Hannah Roopen (no. 420)



I attended a session on speech and development of toddlers at my local hospital and during the presentation, my heart started pounding because I realized something was wrong with my daughter, Hannah. We were referred to an audiologist and I must admit nothing prepared us for the news we received.

Hannah was 18 months old when she was diagnosed with hearing loss in both ears. We didn't understand what was happening and thought it could be corrected medically, but it was not to be. She was fitted with hearing aids on 09 July 2009, and cried when she heard the sounds the first time. We had to start a new chapter in our lives. She got used to her "magic ears" very quickly and started to develop more language. We attended the Carel du Toit Centre for parent guidance classes once a week. It was difficult to adapt to the different methods of teaching, but we persevered and did everything we could to assist Hannah with developing language.

She was also accepted into the school in 2010. Several hearing tests were done during the course of that year, indicating Hannah's hearing was dropping quite dramatically. We then contacted Tygerberg Hospital for an assessment for a cochlear implant in August 2010. Hannah was a possible candidate for a cochlear implant, but it was not urgent. We were opposed to an implant because her speech was fine to us and we also didn't want our child to go through a major operation.

She was then assessed again in May 2011 and it was then recommended that Hannah have the operation otherwise she won't be able to reach her full potential. It was the most difficult decision we had to make. The operation on the 10th October 2011 was a great success and she had a speedy recovery. The implant was switched on 6 weeks later and she adapted to it very quickly. She has really become much more confident, her language has developed much more and I'm proud to say that she's on par with her normal hearing peers.

When we started this journey in 2009, everything looked dark and uncertain around us but now we are so excited for all the challenges and successes that lie ahead.

Craig and Linda

Darren Archer (no. 411)



I was born deaf and numerous tests found no known cause. I coped well with my hearing aids but early in 2010, I realized that my hearing had dropped a bit. My audiologist in Port Elizabeth confirmed that my hearing had dropped and told me about a cochlear implant.

I thought about it a lot and then went to Tygerberg Hospital in Cape Town. I was considered a good candidate and decided that it would be good for me. I had the cochlear implant operation in July 2011. This was definitely the best gift I ever got. My switch-on was in August and it was strange to hear more, different and even the soft sounds. It is amazing what the cochlear implant has done for me. I'm able to hear more sounds and differentiate between sounds that I had never heard before.

My speech has also improved and I'm able to communicate and understand more in the hearing world. I'm far more comfortable with my cochlear implant now than I was in the first few months of having had the operation. This has definitely changed my life and it's the most amazing gift for anyone who has a severe to profound hearing loss.

Lindi Walters (no. 427)

Ons kan nie glo dis 'n jaar sedert ons reis met ons Lindi kind se gehoorverlies begin het nie. Lindi het reeds in die hospitaal na geboorte die gehoorsifingstoets gefaal. Na verskeie toetse is haar uitermatige gehoorverlies op ses weke ouderdom bevestig. Ek het egter bly glo en hoop dat die uitslae van die toetse foutief was totdat my man vir my gesê het dat ek dit moet aanvaar dat ons 'n dogtertjie het wat nie kan hoor nie.

Ons het vir wysheid gebid om die regte besluit namens ons dogtertjie te neem wat die beste vir haar toekoms sal wees. Sy is op ses weke ouderdom met gehoorapparate gepas maar wat nie voldoende klankversterking kon gee nie a.g.v. die graad van haar gehoorverlies. 'n Nuwe wêreld het vir ons oopgegaan. 'n Kogleëre inplanting was ons wonderwerk en sy het haar eerste inplanting gekry op ses maande. Dit was wonderlik om te sien hoe sy op klank begin reageer en haar naam ken. Net voor haar eerste verjaardagsdag het sy haar tweede inplanting gekry.

Die uitstekende leiding van die kogleëre span was professioneel en ondersteunend wat ons pad soveel makliker gemaak het. Die feit dat hul alles in hul vermoë gedoen het om Lindi so gou moontlik aan klank bloot te stel sodat sy spoedig kan leer hoor, luister en praat, was gerustellend. Vriende, kennisse, familie en onbekendes wat net onmiddellik hul onvoorwaardelike ondersteuning aangebied het, hetsy moreel of deur fondse, was en is 'n ongelooflike ervaring.



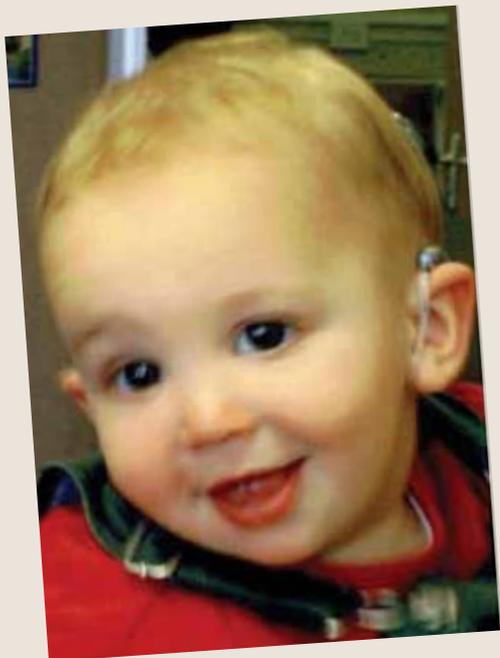
Booyé, Lindi se boetie wat twee jaar ouer is as sy, is van die begin af betrek by die hele proses. Volgens hom het hy ook klankprosesseerders gedra toe hy klein was. Ons is vreugdevol, hoopvol en dankbaar oor Lindi se toekoms. Ons kan haar nie meer voorstel sonder haar nuwe 'ore'níe. Alle eer aan die Here wat daagliks die pad met ons as gesin stap.

Moenie wag vir die storm om oor te waai nie leer eerder om in die reën te dans. Hennie en Mariza

Helena (no. 406) en Gerhard Loedolff (no. 412)

Dit is deesdae die gebruik dat 'n siftingstoets op babatjies pas na geboorte gedoen word. Hierdie toets is nooit op Helena, gedoen nie. Toe ons daarvan bewus geword het, was ons nie geïntereseerd daarin nie. Irene het een aand gesê dat sy nie seker is of Helena kan hoor nie.

Van baie vroeg het ons vermoed dat daar dalk iets fout mag wees met haar gehoor, maar ons het elke keer 'n goeie rede gehad om die vermoede af te skryf. Soms sou ons hande klap en 1 uit 10 keer sal sy omkyk. Dit het vir lank so aangehou totdat ons besef het dat die verskonings nie meer voldoende is nie. Ons wou ook nie vir die toetse gaan nie, want 'n finale antwoord het die potensiaal om 'n gesin se wese te verander. Sy was en is visueel baie skerp en kon jou flous deur net die beweging van jou lippe of 'n skaduwee te sien.



Na baie oorweging het ons haar by 'n oudioloog laat toets en is Helena op 'n jaar gediagnoseer met uitermatige gehoorverlies. Sy het die volgende week haar gehoorapparate gekry en by die Carel du Toit Sentrum se oerleidingsprogram ingeskakel. Dit is hier waar die liefde van mense met 'n passie vir kinders met gehoorgestremdhede ons lewens verander het. Aanvanklik het ons teen die aanbeveling van 'n kogleêre implanting geveg, maar dit het al hoe duideliker geraak dat dit die beste opsie vir Helena sou wees.

Helena se boetie, Gerhard is intussen op 1 September 2010 gebore en op 3 weke ook met uitermatige gehoorverlies gediagnoseer. Die nuus van 'n tweede kind met dieselfde probleem het ons natuurlik baie ontstel. Na elke brokkie slegte nuus het ons gebid vir 'n wonderwerk. Die wonderwerk was oppad. Gerhard het baie gou sy gehoorapparate ontvang. Hulle was helder rooi soos die kleur van 'n Ferrari. Na baie oorweging kry Helena haar 1ste implanting in haar regter oor op 14 Maart 2011 en dit is op 14 April aangeskakel. Ons mediese fonds en 'n onbekende weldoener het vir Helena se eerste implanting betaal. Op 18 Julie 2011 word Gerhardjie die jongste baba in die program wat 'n

bilaterale implanting op 10 maande kry. Weereens voorsien die Here aan ons behoeftes en die medies dek 100% van die een oor en 90% van die ander. Gerhard is in Augustus aangeskakel en het dadelik goeie vordering begin toon.

Op Vrydag 10 Desember ontdek ons dat die liggies op Helena se apparaat soms groen en soms oranje flikker. Dit was nie die norm nie en ons het vir Helena se oudioloog by Tygerberg hospitaal gekontak. Na bietjie ondersoek het sy die regte mense in Johannesburg gekontak, die volgende oggend is toetse op die toestel gedoen. Resultate wat in London ontleed is het bewys dat die inplanting foutief was. Die ou inplanting moes uitgehaal word en die nuwe moes in. Makliker gesê as gedaan, maar Maandag is sy geopereer en Donderdag weer aangeskakel. Helena was dus korter as 'n week sonder gehoor. Helena se ander oor is 13 Februarie 2012 geïmplanteer. Al 5 operasies het binne 1 jaar geskied.

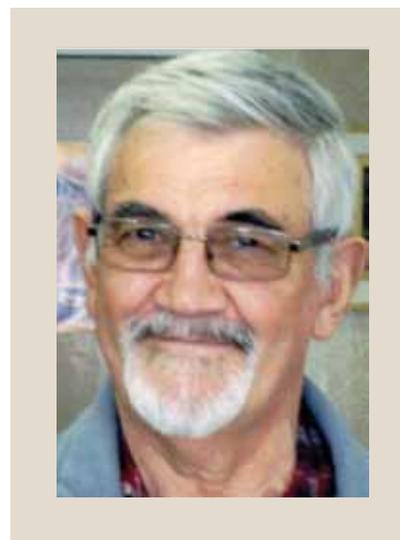
Altwee ons kinders kan nou hoor en het 'n vol lewe. Daar is niks wat kan beskryf hoe 'n kind se gesig ophelder wanneer daar vir die eerste keer klank deur hulle oortjies vloei nie. Dit is asof hulle uitgesien het na die klank wat hul nooit sou hê nie. Die eerste keer wat hulle "Mamma" en "Pappa" sê was soos musiek in ons ore. Hoe kan mens ooit dankie sê vir die gawe van gehoor? Om 'n kindjie 'n kans te gee om deel van 'n wêreld te wees van kommunikasie en interaksie, van kontak met die wêreld en jou omgewing? Gerhard is soos sy naam sê: " 'n baie brawe vegtertjie" en 'n regte seuntjie wat hou van sing. Helena is soos 'n vlindertjie, vry in die wind. Sy noem haar boetie "Gatjie" en hy haar "A-A". Here dankie vir U liefde en mildelike voorsiening.
Irene & William

Thys Esterhuysen (no. 408)

Wanneer 'n mens se waarneming van klank begin verdof, word jou wêreld van klank al kleiner en eensamer totdat dit naderhand voel asof jou lewe verby is. Die trauma van hoor en dan ewe skielik doof wees, is geweldig. Soveel meer omdat dit ook vir jou geliefdes en vriende onverstaanbaar en moeilik is om te verwerk. Dit lei tot wedersydse frustrasie en ongeduld. Hoe kan jy aan iemand verduidelik hoe dit voel om nie meer aan 'n gesprek te kan deelneem nie. Jy raak al hoe meer en meer in jouself ingetrokke en wil al minder in geselskappe verkeer.

Dan kom die reddingsboei. Daar is 'n moontlikheid dat jy dalk beter kan hoor. Is jy 'n geskikte kandidaat? Kan jy die fondse om daarvoor te betaal bybring? Wanneer dit oorkom is, breek die groot oomblik uiteindelik aan. Jy kwalifiseer fisies en geldelik vir 'n kogleêre inplanting. Dan uiteindelik breek die dag van die operasie aan. Jy is bang en vol vrees, maar wil dit nie vir iemand wys nie. Die operasie is 'n sukses. Die dag van aanskakeling: O, wat 'n teleurstelling. Net 'n oorweldigende geraas. Jy besluit om vas te byt, want almal sê dit word beter en jy wil vir niemand wys hoe teleurgesteld jy is nie. Nou kom die wrywing

tussen jou, die familie en vriende. Hulle verwag dat as jy die operasie gehad het moet jy dadelik goed kan hoor. Die skeptiese kyke van veral vriende maak jou nog meer pessimisties.



Soos die dae en weke verbygaan word stemme en geluide al duideliker. Dan eendag besef jy dat iets wonderliks aan die gebeur is. Al die irriterende geraas in jou oor is besig om te verdwyn (die sonbesies en krieke het huietoe gegaan). Jy kan stemme duideliker hoor en natuurlike geluide soos voëltjies is duidelik hoorbaar. Jy raak opgewonde en begin met jou apparaat te eksperimenteer. Nou is die TV, telefoon en ander se geselskap 'n genot en nie meer 'n straf nie. Wat 'n wonderlike gevoel. Ek voel weer mens. 'n Wonderwerk het met my gebeur.

Paul Suttén (no. 422)

About 10 years ago I came into the house from gardening, showered and all of a sudden my right ear bubbled, bobbed, went "plop, bloop.. pop, pop" as if

it had bubbles in it and then turned off like a switch. I was stone deaf in that previously perfectly good ear. I was struck instantaneously giddy, dizzy, and sick to

the stomach and had hideous vertigo, and needed to vomit. Fortunately my bed was near, as was a dustbin. To be struck by Meniere's/vertigo/deafness one can only be thankful that I was not driving or anywhere but home.

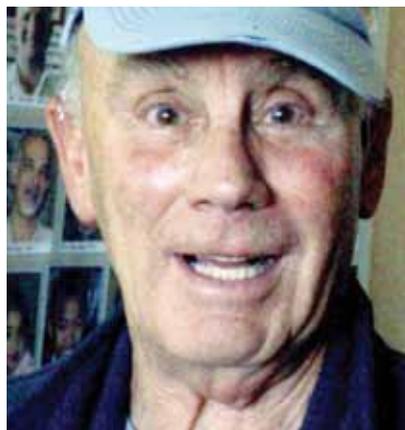
I lived with that 100% deaf ear for a decade. It caused me to become reclusive, irritable at times, & short-tempered. Then gradually my other ear started to fail too and I realised that for my wife's and my kid's sake, I had to take remedial action. I consulted at least 4 audiologists. I got a hearing aid for the fast-failing good ear. Now not so good anymore so I investigated the CI route and met the gang at Tygerberg Hospital. Eventually the CI decision was made with long teeth. The cost was exorbitant, the evidence of great success was to me rather skimpy, and as an economist the value per unit return seemed hazy if not dubious. I met Prof. Derrick Wagenfeld who did not try to talk me into the operation. He was cool, academic and personable and left it up to me. So we went for the CI operation.

First month post-operation ... uh, uh. Month 2 ... bit of a gain. Month 3 ... it actually works. Months 4/5/6 ... this unit is a grand invention, or is the brain a

Liso Mushweshwe (no. 425)

Liso was born on 23 December 2008 in Mbekweni, Paarl, the 5th child of Solomizi and Patricia. We found out he is deaf when he was turning 1 year. I was very upset and did not want to accept it because I already have another deaf child, Songe who is 18 years old. My family and especially my Mum said to me "God is not a stupid Man, He knows what He is doing". One day those children can put you somewhere on top of the mountain.

The audiologist referred him to Carel du Toit Centre where deaf children learn to speak. After 3 months they told me good news that Liso had been chosen to be a candidate to get a cochlear implant. To get a cochlear implant is not easy. You must work hard to get funds and it costs a lot of money. I believe God does not give you something that you cannot carry. I was helped by many people to raise funds. I want to thank them all, especially the People of Siyashova, the Staff of Mitchell's Plain Hospital, Fatima, two trains from Mbekweni to Cape Town, train no 3508 and 3510. I want to say a big thank you to



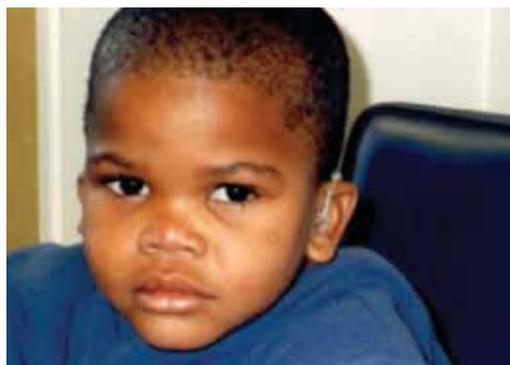
great invention ... or my audiologist who hammered me through my paces to re-learn through that dead ear and dead brain ... who relentlessly made me do homework; who hammered me to recognize sounds/words/etc ...

These are the people I owe my hearing to today. They never gave up on me. I nearly gave up on me many times but they did not. And to my wife, who stood by me through years of stress as her man grew more and more morose. Thank you, my pillar of strength.

Sisi Phumla Languza Bafo Matshabalala-Mshengu – Venge ndiyabonga ngegalelo lakho kuhiso.

Liso's operation was done on 21 October 2011 and the switch-on, on 11 November. It was a big day for him; he smiled when he heard the sound. He is doing well with his cochlear implant, he can say a few words now, e.g. open, bye bye, Mama and he responds when you call his name.

Patricia



Abdul Mu-eez Matthews (no. 410)

I am a bubbly, energy loaded 4 year old. In my early development my parents noticed something was not right with me. I was sent to Red Cross Hospital, where I was diagnosed with hearing loss just after my 2nd birthday. Later I was fitted with hearing aids but they were of no use.

It was very difficult to understand Abdul Mueez, and as family and friends we used sign and gestures to communicate with him. A support group suggested to us to take him to the Carel du Toit Centre. Since attending the school we saw a change in our son. The staff told us about the cochlear implant. They told us it was going to be hard work and costly, and it was the only thing that could help our son hear sound. The only problem was the implant had to be done by Abdul Mueez's 3rd birthday. We raised the money and in mid June he went for his cochlear implant and August his cochlear was switched on. Just the expression on his face when he heard sound for the first time was priceless.

By the grace of the Almighty our son is able to hear sound. It has been 9 months since he has had his cochlear implant and Abdul Mueez's development has improved a lot.
Matthews Family.



Lisle Lourens (no. 431)

Ek is 'n dowe onderwyseres by De la Bat Skool. Ek is doof gebore en ek het 'n dowe broer. Ek het van kleins af gehoorapparate gedra en kon goed met my twee gehoorapparate hoor. Ek het goeie spraak en kon oor die telefoon hoor met my gehoorapparaat.

Oor die jare het my linkeroor se gehoor geleidelik verswak, maar dit het my nie so erg gepla nie, want ek kon nog goed hoor met my regteroor. Ek het deelyds by UCT geswot en op 1 April 2011 'n klas bygewoon. Terwyl ons vir ons dosent gewag het, het my gehoor in my regteroor skielik verswak. Ek kon glad nie in die klas hoor nie. Gelukkig het ek 'n tolk gehad om die klasse te volg.

Ek het gedink dis my apparaat wat stukkend was, maar eintlik was dit my gehoor wat so skielik verswak het dat 'n gehoorapparaat my nie meer gehelp het nie. Dit was vir my 'n groot skok. Dit was 'n moeilike tyd. Skielik kon ek nie meer oor die foon praat nie, en ek moes al meer staat maak op liples en gebaretaal. Ek het gesukkel om my horende man en seuns te verstaan. Ek was afhanklik van 'n tolk in vergaderings. Ek is 'n onafhanklike en trotse persoon en dit was vir my moeilik om te weet ek is afhanklik van tolke.

Ek het toe Tygerberg Hospitaal gekontak an na vele toetse was ek 'n geskikte kandidaat. Ek was bang en onseker of ek moet voortgaan met die operasie. Vandag is ek baie dankbaar dat ek vasgebyt het en op God vertrou het. Dit is lekker om weer te kan hoor. Ek kan my man en seuns se stemme hoor en na musiek luister. Soms klink dit snaaks, maar ek kan ou musiek herken en dit geniet. Ek probeer om weer oor 'n telefoon te praat. Ek is nie meer afhanklik van tolke nie. Ek het na my ou lewe teruggekeer en oorweeg dit sterk om vir 'n tweede inplanting te gaan.



Sharon Webb (no. 421)



Life's a journey, enjoy the ride, so I am told. However, my journey into a silent world was by no means a journey to enjoy. I had been wearing 2 hearing aids for nearly 10 years when in February 2008 my journey into the quiet world suddenly got very bad. I lived in East London at that time, and noticed that I was unable to understand speech on the telephone. I also had to be very close to the speaker to hear and understand what was being said. If there was a lot of background noise I simply could not make out what was being said.

From August 2008 to July 2010 I had seen 7 audiologists, in East London, Durban, and Cape Town. They tried different hearing aids, and none seemed to help. I then moved down to Cape Town, to be closer to my family, as life was in general very difficult not

being able to converse in any way. Early in 2011, I was referred to the cochlear implant team at Tygerberg Hospital. From then I was on my road to having a life once more. After being thoroughly assessed, I was indeed a candidate for a cochlear implant. I had my implant on 13 October 2011 and the switch on date was 3 November.

I am now able to hear the TV, first time in four years, and lately am even managing to hear on the telephone. I would truthfully say I have about 55% hearing now to the 10% I had a few months back. My life is slowly coming back to normal after a journey of four years. I truly do thank God for allowing me to have travelled this journey. At last I can start enjoying the ride. I can hear the birds, the rain, and what a blessing to be able to hear my grandchildren talking and singing. That is music to my ears.

Fanie du Toit (no. 415)

A message I received 29 years ago was...

"You are hearing impaired, you have a progressive hearing loss. Make the best of your hearing aids for as long as you can and accept the reality."

During 1977/78, I was part of the army operational activities in the Caprivi Strip. During a skirmish as a gunner of an armoured vehicle, I was exposed to excessive gunfire, with the end result being a progressive hearing loss in both ears. For two decades my family & friends had to go through the different & difficult stages of progressive hearing loss with me. At that stage I was a senior lecturer in electronics at a tertiary institution, with wonderful opportunities ahead. I did not only just lose my work, but my career as well. My new employer APD Free State changed my job-specification to accommodate my disability, supported my studies at UNISA towards being an Education Practitioner and provided Lip speaking / note taking services in my working environment.



But the question was: How do I accept the reality that goes with hearing loss? The feeling of being cut-off, the process of learning to lip-read and to make the best of a hearing aid? To maintain yourself as employee,

husband and father of two children? To accept an interpreter in the communication process, as well as other people's reaction to this. Many think only of the "physically" disabled – the challenges of the mobility impaired, when matters of accessibility and rehabilitation are discussed – with hearing loss the challenges are totally ignored. For example: the inaccessibility of sound in conference centers, churches, classrooms, theatres and evacuation procedures in buildings. The hard reality was out on many levels: at work, in my family, in my church. I had to learn to look at life in another way. I have never reached a deep acceptance of my disability – that which people so wish to see but rather the passion to try and live successfully with it.

Four years ago, I met an audiologist, from

Johannesburg. She pin pointed the exact emotional stage I found myself in. Over a period of time she allowed me to grow through this difficult process – until I was ready to consider a cochlear implant. 22 August 2011 was the day of my first implant. On that day my life changed completely. Then the switch on: "I could hear" "My dream had come true". I could hear the voices of people and surrounding sounds. My experience outside the hospital just after my switch on was a major challenge.

The sounds were overwhelming. Some for the first time and others again after 29 years: the rain drops falling on the roof of the car, the jangle of car keys, the car's engine, the tick of the indicator, and for the first time, the ringing tone of a cell phone, my wife's voice reading sms's of congratulations without looking at her while I was the one driving home.

Dorelle Cornberg (no. 417)

When I was three years old I had a hearing problem with one of my ears. My ma took me to Groote Schuur hospital for a hearing test. I was found hard of hearing in both ears, so I wore hearing aids. I went to a normal hearing primary school.

When I was in Standard 2, I couldn't cope with my school work so I was transferred to Dominican School for the Deaf. I finished Std 8. There were no matric opportunities there, so I went to Durban VN Naik School for the Deaf where I completed Matric. Then I came home to my Mother City. I went to college to study for a Travel & Tourism Diploma. It was not easy but I worked hard for it. After I studied I struggled to find a job. They did not accept me because of my hearing loss. They said I must work on the phone. I felt depressed.

Then I married and I had beautiful hearing children. It was a little bit difficult to communicate with my children, at work, family and others. I speak well but my hearing went down. I went to Tygerberg Hospital where audiologists tested my hearing. They said I had a further loss of hearing and explained that a cochlear implant would help with more hearing. So I accepted it.

In September 2011, I went to Durbanville Medi Clinic where I had a cochlear implant operation in my right ear. I was very nervous but excited. After the operation I didn't feel any pain. After two weeks

I was switched-on. I heard different sounds. A cochlear implant is much better than a hearing aid. I am going to hold off for a few years for a second cochlear implant, only because the hearing aid in my other ear balances out the sound of the cochlear implant, and makes everything sound 'normal'. I'm so happy I can hear to speak on the phone and I understand and communicate well with hearing people.

I enjoy understanding my gospel church service, and understand my pastor sermons. Praise God. My family and friends, colleagues are so happy and proud of me that I understand clearly and I also speak better.



Diane Gurland (no. 440)

Do we really recognize these angels that change our quality of life? Do we realise how much time it takes our learned doctors and professionals to keep up to date with the medical and technological innovations in the world? Or the patience of so many friends and family? In this moment I am aware of how much I have been so generously given by so many people.

The 5th April 2012 is a day I will never forget. Two and a half weeks after my cochlear implant operation my hearing sense was switched on. A sense I never thought I would have again – the ability to hear sounds again, words, music, water, the sounds of someone chopping carrots!

My story goes back to my childhood. Since I was a young child, I was diagnosed with various medical problems including brittle bones, kidney disease and other general health disorders which made me small and physically fragile.

In spite of everything, for some reason, I have been blessed with many miracles in my last 50 something years. After a successful kidney transplant three years ago, I was given a new lease of life. My hearing loss was gradual. I found myself profoundly deaf a year ago. Being a sociable and out-going person, you can imagine what a loss this was to me. Because of the consistent love and support from family I gradually gained the confidence to explore the possibility of a cochlear implant. There were so many odds stacked against me. The effects of the kidney transplant complicated my brittle bone disease even further. But in the end, we took the chance. The operation worked. I began to feel not only that I had climbed a very high mountain but was ready to reach the peak and see and hear the world with fresh eyes and new ears.

That day in April when I came out of the switch on I found myself in shock. I could not believe I was hearing the rain, the wind and the music on the car radio. Not the lyrics of course but the music. I arrived home and the small pleasure of hearing of some footsteps. I nearly jumped out of my skin when the garbage truck arrived to remove the rubbish bins. I thought it was World War III.



Two months on, I am back at work, I am involved in meetings and hearing my colleagues around a conference table. I have even started talking and hearing on the land line when for so long I had only been able to communicate by text messages. My husband and children are so excited and they constantly remind me of what I am hearing now.

Time for me to start giving back. I now simply want to spread my joy and gratitude. My first attempt will be a Fundraiser for Hear Us on the 29th September 2012 at Moyo in Stellenbosch. I trust, from the bottom of my heart that we can all start believing in miracles for our children and children's children who need to get through the particular difficulties they have to face.

Another way, in which I would like to give back, is to offer support to anyone who needs to talk through what I have learned. Please do not hesitate to reach me at diane@moyo.co.za With appreciation and gratitude to my family, to my back up team and God Almighty who I believes watches over all of us all the time.

Twee van die jong volwasse inplant-gebruikers het hul lywe in “diep waters” begewe die afgelope jaar.

Johannes Brink, van George het vir ’n jaar op ’n seiljag in die meditereense see gaan werk en Rupert van Zyl, van Lutzville het ’n kwalifikasie vir diepsee duik behaal. Hier is hul stories:

Johannes Brink

MY GAP YEAR

After I matriculated with satisfying marks, I was “forced” by my dad to take a gap year which he believed would be a life changing experience for me. So I decided to do yachting in the Mediterranean. Before I could go sailing, I had to do courses to qualify as a deckhand to apply for jobs. I did my course with my two good mates in Langebaan for 5 weeks. It was one of the best times in my life.

So my gap year adventure started unfolding, and in a blink of an eye - I was already in Barcelona. But it was quite frustrating at the beginning because we could not access the ports in Barcelona due to security fences around the marinas.

So with many decisions to make, my final choice and it was to take the train from Barca to Antibes, which is in France, as we were more confident in finding work there. Finally after a long mission by train, I arrived in Antibes! At least now I had access to the amazing multi-billion dollar luxury yacht industry. I have been day working all over the south of France for 7 months on 15 different super yachts.

Then the big day arrived. I received an email from the Captain of one of the yachts asking me if I would like a job for the winter. I got the job on motor yacht called JIVA. I currently have a fulltime job on Jiva and what an experience!



My current yacht - Jiva



Rupert van Zyl (no. 66)

28 Januarie 2012 was vir die 21-jarige Rupert van Zyl 'n besondere dag. Rupert is baie lief vir die see. Hy geniet dit om vis te vang en gaan graag Hentiesbaai toe. Hy duik kreef vanaf 12 jarige ouderdom saam met sy pa.

Eendag het sy ma gehoor van 'n scubaduik praatjie oor die radio en hom daarvan vertel. Hy was vreeslik opgewonde om dit te doen, maar was onseker of hy gaan inpas tussen die horendes. Hy het begin soek na iemand wat hom baie goed ken om saam met hom die kursus te doen. Sy niggie het ingestem om die kursus saam met hom te doen, en sy het hom "veilig" laat voel. Groot was die opgewondenheid toe hy die eerste keer in die swembad kon oefen. Dit wat hy gevrees het, was toe nie 'n probleem nie – niemand kan onder die water hoor nie, en almal moes "sign".



Met sy Nucleus 22 mag hy 25 meter diep duik. Sy instrukteur was baie behulpsaam en het seker gemaak dat hy alles verstaan. Einde Januarie is die groep Kaap toe en het hy sy finale diepsee duik van die boot af gedoen. Rupert het gekwalifiseer as scuba duiker. Ons wil graag weet of daar ander duikers met 'n kogleêre inplanting in Suid-Afrika is.

TWEE NUWE OUDIOLOË IN DIE TYGERBERG HOSPITAAL KOGLEÊRE INPLANTINGSPAN

We are pleased to welcome audiologist Suryn Lombaard, who joined us in July 2011.

After graduating from the University of Stellenbosch, Suryn worked as an audiologist in various National Health Service hospitals in the UK. She was based in the Cochlear Implant Programme at the Royal National Throat Nose and Ear Hospital in London for the past 7 years and is excited about the opportunity to contribute to the team at Tygerberg Hospital. Those of you who have already met her, share in the knowledge that we are fortunate to welcome her to our team.

We have also expanded to include the practice of Deidré Stroebel as a satellite clinic where audiological services will be provided for cochlear implantees. Deidré did her first switch-on on Robin du Plessis (No 444) on the 21st May 2012. Robin is a retired bank manager from Parklands and does beautiful woodwork for his hobby.



Suryn Lombaard



Robin du Plessis & Deidré Stroebel

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- Freedom users: remember to clean the microphone cover regularly, or even replace it if you have a spare.
- CP810 users: remember to bring your remote assistant to all your MAPping sessions.
- CP810 users: remember to change the microphone protectors every 3 to 6 months, depending on how clean they are.
- Check the skin at the place where the magnet connects to make sure the skin underneath is not showing signs that the magnet is too tight. The skin will appear red in comparison with the skin around it.
- Make an appointment once a year to see your implant surgeon for a check-up.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Sean Bennett (No. 396) successfully completed her B Com Honours in Financial Analysis and Management. Congratulations. We are very proud of her.

ARE YOU COPING WITH HEARING LOSS?

Hear2Day is an active South African group that aims to enhance communication through listening. We campaign for better conditions for people with hearing loss and meet regularly in a social setting to discuss and share hearing-related experiences. Email us at hello@hear2day.co.za to get in touch and join us at our next meeting.

TIME FOR CLEARING OUT CUPBOARDS AND DRAWERS

If you have any old hearing aids that are not being used any more or any spare parts of your cochlear implant system that you have no use for, please bring them to your audiologist. We have use for second hand hearing aids and other spares.

IN MEMORIAM

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the sudden passing of two of our adult implantees, Hester Verster (No. 8) and Ralph Stockhall (No. 73). Hester received her cochlear implant in 1988 and Ralph in 1996. They were both part of the initial group of implantees that taught us so much about hearing with the cochlear implant technology of the time. They both contributed to the support group in the pioneering years of public awareness and acceptance of cochlear implantation.

We also lost Alida van Heerden (No. 293) who lived in Springs, Hermien Marais (No. 265) from Stellenbosch and Yunus Moolla (No. 236) from Stanger and Cape Town. Our thoughts and condolences to their loved ones.



Hester Verster (No. 8)/ Ralph Stockhall (No.73)/ Hermien Marias (No.265)/ Alida van Heerden (No. 293)/ Yunus Moolla (No. 236)