



## COCHLEAR IMPLANT UNIT KOGLEÛRE INPLANTINGSEENHEID

JULY 2009 NEWSLETTER • NUUSBRIEF JULIE 2009

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

### ERUS PRETORIUS (No 312)



**M**y lewe het verander toe my kogleÛre inplanting aangeskakel is...

My naam is Erus Pretorius, ek woon in Bellville en is 17 jaar oud, in Gr.11 in Bellville HoÛrskool .

Ek het altyd gesukkel om te hoor, veral in die klas wanneer die leerders lawaai. As my vriende dan met my gesels het, kon ek nie hoor wat hulle sê nie. Dit het my vriende weggedryf, en veral leerders met wie ek nie vriende is nie. 'n Ander ding wat ook sleg was, was dat ek nie na musiek kon luister en dit geniet nie.

My sosiale wêreld was erg! My ouers het gesien ek sukkel en hulle het begin beplan om vir my 'n kogleÛre inplanting in my regteroor, want my regteroor was die swakste, te laat doen. Ons het afsprake gemaak en by die eerste afspraak is daar aan my verduidelik hoe dit werk en hoe dit lyk. Ek was nie baie gelukkig nie, want die apparaat is groot en almal sal dit sien . Ek hou nie daarvan dat mense na my moet kyk nie. Die ander ding

is dat ek nie meer kontak sport mag doen nie. Ek is mal oor rugby en is vandag nog hartseer dat ek nie meer rugby mag speel nie, maar gelukkig is ek baie goed in hokkie. Ek het geweet dit gaan my lewe positief en negatief beïnvloed. Ek kon nie nee sê nie, want ek weet my ouers wil die beste vir my hê en ek wou beter hoor. My operasie was op die 1ste Oktober 2007 en van daardie dag af het ek geweet my lewe gaan verander. 'n Paar maande nadat my spraak prosesseerder aangeskakel is, kon ek al baie beter hoor.

Ek geniet dit om nou na musiek te luister en ek kan met my vriende in 'n lawaaierige klas gesels. Ek kan ook nou 'n gesprek in 'n restaurant volg, wat voorheen vir my onmoontlik was. Ek het my hare langer laat groei om my prosesseerder toe te maak, maar die rugby is finaal uit my lewe. Ek het gesien dat daar meer voordele as nadele is wat 'n invloed op my lewe het. Ek dank my gesin vir die ondersteuning en ek dank die Here dat Hy vir my hierdie groot geskenk gegee het.

Ek gebruik ook 'n FM-sisteem saam met my kogleÛre inplanting sowel as my gehoorapparaat in my ander oor wanneer ek in die klas of in die kerk is. Ek is mal oor my FM, want dit help my om meer as 100% te luister en te hoor veral in die klas as my onderwysers 'n onderwerp verduidelik. Dit "rock" om musiek met die FM te luister, want jy kry 'n audio kabel daarmee saam.

Ek speel nou vir die 1ste span hokkie en my afrigter sien die FM as 'n oplossing om inligting op die veld aan die ander spelers oor te dra. Terwyl ons 'n wedstryd speel gee my afrigter vir my die inligting oor die FM wat ek dan aan iemand in my span moet oordra.

Glo my die FM help jou baie, om die waarheid te sê jy het dit nodig, want jy weet nie wat jy alles mis voordat jy dit nie regtig gebruik nie.

## PETER MARKEY (No 337)



**M**y hearing loss started with a bang – literally – a big gun fired and I was too close to it – there was no law in those days (1962) to say people associated with loud noises should wear ear defenders. Apart from a ringing in the ears, there were no immediate ill effects, but gradually things changed – I took a record back to the shop because there were no high notes – “It’s you, sir, not the record”! Female voices became difficult to understand, social occasions were no longer a pleasant experience and everybody got fed up with having to repeat themselves, frequently more than once.

The hearing aids I used developed from analogue to digital, became stronger, more versatile and more expensive. They helped me a lot, but eventually, after a trial with the very latest model (April

2008) I was told “that’s it, we can’t help you any more – what you need is a cochlear implant”.

So in May 2008 we started the “countdown”. The interviews, assessments, tests and questions spread over 2 months – all conducted in an atmosphere of total friendliness and empathy. Thanks to the team, I was approved as a recipient for a Nucleus Freedom Implant. The operation was scheduled for 25 August at Vergelegen Medi-Clinic in Somerset West.

“Switch On” day was 16 September – and it was just like Christmas! A huge box was unpacked, the most important of which was the speech processor. This was soon installed, hooked up to a computer and I was switched on. I must have looked quite stupid sitting there with this huge grin on my face, because there I was, aged 75, hearing everything with such clarity it was unbelievable.

Since that magic day my life has changed so much, it’s like being born again. Friends and relations still can’t believe that it’s me chattering on the telephone (cell phone as well), happily taking part in social occasions and going to clubs and theatres. I even went to bingo – didn’t win though!

Back-up and after sales service have been superb and my visits to Tygerberg Hospital for tune-ups and assessments have been a pleasure. At my most recent test at Tygerberg I got 99% – can’t be bad!

Finally, it has to be said that in terms of Rands and Cents, cochlear implants don’t come cheap, but you cannot even begin to calculate a value for the magnificent improvement in the quality of life which the implant brings.

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## VIOLET DIRKS (No 336)



**I** had normal hearing until age 27 years. Then I lost it all for 26 years. The right ear was completely dead and about 97% loss in the left ear. I wore one of the strongest hearing aids but still struggled to hear. I was cut off completely from the telephone and television. Over the years my hearing deteriorated to the extent that nearly everyone started writing to me. I have accepted it as God’s will but never stopped praying for my hearing.

Then came my two miracles: first the invention of my cochlear implant. Secondly, with the help of Tygerberg Hospital I received my cochlear implant on the 15th of August 2008 and I am really grateful for this opportunity.

At first when I received the news of the implant I became very confused. I did not know if I must feel excited or nervous. All sorts of questions went through my mind. How much would it benefit me and how would my body

respond? Then again I put my trust in God to prepare me for this wonderful operation and guidance for the surgeon. I asked everyone to remember me in prayer. The next day after the operation I experienced no pain or discomfort. In fact if it was not for the bandage then I would have thought I still had to undergo the op. I would definitely have my other ear done if I had the money. I highly recommend the cochlear implant to any suitable candidate. My switch-on took place three weeks later. That was when I received my gift from God.

I made my first telephone call in 26 years just two weeks after the switch-on. I hear quite a lot with my cochlear implant. It is so nice to knock on someone's door and hear the words "who's there" or "come in". Everyone used to know it was me before because I never responded.

I love my new life of sounds. The tweet-tweet of birds, knock on my door, raindrops, footsteps behind me, someone calling, talking from behind me, kettle boiling and switching off, water running, washing machine rinse, spin, drain, spin, stop signal, microwave-signal, telephone ringing and a clear tick-tick of a clock. The radio attracts my mind with news and some lines in

announcements. Music sounds like music to my ears. Some news and some lines in films on television I hear clearly. I hear quite a few lines in church and best of all I can pray with my eyes closed and say Amen with the congregation. I enjoy fellowship meetings now because I can hear it. I enjoy listening to my 3 and 7 year old grandsons. I find it so much easier to communicate and can even do so with two or three different background sounds. I will even start a conversation with strangers and enjoy it because they don't have to repeat all the time. Sometimes I can even carry on doing what I'm busy with and hear at the same time. I especially enjoy communication when night falls because I don't have to jump up to switch on the light to hear anymore. Being able to hear in a car at night without the light on is wonderful, it makes me feel like everyone else. I don't really lip-read anymore. A joke sounds like a joke to laugh about, not like a statement due to all the repeats.

I'm very happy to know my hearing with the cochlear will not deteriorate like in the case with my normal hearing. I can even hear clearly with my cochlear implant while I have the flu. I'm not aware of my tinnitus anymore. I'm stronger and more confident. I feel like a new person. I have my life back.

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## ADELE COETZEE (No 338)



**A**n die begin, met die aanskakeling het dit nogal geklink soos robotmannelies wat met my praat. Eintlik was die klanke soos 'n deur wat klap en 'n stoel se "springs" wat kraak, duideliker as die gemurmur van mense se stemme. Ek moet darem sê dat die kraak van papier my die eerste keer vir 'n ses geslaan het. By die tweede instelling het my gesig in 'n glimlag ontpop, want toe kon ek die stemme van my ouers en my man duidelik herken. My ouers, man en familie het my geweldig ondersteun. Hulle het heeltyd gevra as hul

iets hoor, "Adele hoor jy dit" en dan gesê wat hul hoor, soms het dit my gepla, maar eintlik was dit 'n goeie ding, want so het ek geleer om die geluide vas te trap wat ek onseker van was.

'n Oomblik wat my tot nou toe nog laat glimlag is toe ons huistoe ry. My ouers was by my en ek hoor toe net so 'n fluit geluid. Dog toe dis my pa wat sit en fluit, en ek klap hom toe sommer agter die blad en sê hy moet my darem nie so irriteer nie. Ai man, dit was die oostewind wat so by die kar se ruit ingewaai het, sjoer maar my pa het gelag.

Vir my man by die huis was dit 'n groot aanpassing. Hy was gewoond as hy uit die kamer vir my roep en ek nie reageer nie, dan moet hy my kom soek. Wel toe my man uit die kamer op die hardste van sy longkapasiteit gil, "Adele", reageer ek en loop gang af om te kyk of hy nog asem oor het. Halfpad loop ons mekaar skoon uit die aarde. Met my tuiskoms die eerste keer, het ek agtergekom dat my ou huisie nogals nie so stil is soos ek gedink het nie. Ek het twee ringnekke in die ingangsportaal en almal het altyd gekla, dat hul raas en ek sê los my voëltjies uit. Toe ek voet aan wal sit is hulle verban tot die naaldwerkkamer waar ek die deur kan toemaak as hul te veel lawaai.

Nog 'n laaste dingetjie wat mense met normale gehoor nie altyd besef nie. As jul 'n mens bel wat 'n kogleêre inplanting gebruik, gaan asseblief na 'n stil omgewing, anders hoor die gestremde persoon al die

agtergrondsgeluide wat vir julle normaal is, maar ons nog elke dag in verwondering laat. Elke dag leer mens nuwe klanke uitken as jy 'n kogleêre inplanting dra. Die

beste ding wat mens kan doen is om tussen mense te wees, sodat jy stemme kan uitken, en kan gewoon raak, maar soms is dit moeilik en wil mens net wegkruip.

## KATE ALLWOOD (No 344)



It was the hearing screening tests when Kate was 12 days old which first indicated there might be a problem. Although not conclusively abnormal, we had no reason to be suspicious and knew the follow up tests at six weeks would put our minds to rest. Kate was too restless at the 6 weeks test, and again we had no answer and no inkling there might be an issue. At 10 weeks, finally, we decided to take her in again for testing, and confidently sat there smiling knowing everything would be fine. She had been so normal in every way so far, was interacting and responding so beautifully, and seemed to respond to loud noises on occasions.

Kate is our first child so we had no idea that anything was amiss. As a doctor I found it extremely difficult to detect any obvious signs of hearing impairment. I was convinced that this whole testing process was a waste of time, so, very reluctantly conceded (for Sarah's peace of mind) to follow up testing. So we sat confidently smug, watching, with no idea of what was about to happen and just how our lives would change in an instant. The news was broken to us there and then, and the immediate disbelief and denial changed rapidly into a huge boulder that hit us in our chests. The devastation was immediate

and complete. We felt bewildered and alone, with so many hopes and dreams for our daughter evaporating in an instant, and an unimaginable sense of loss and sadness. How could we have been so mistaken? Surely she is not profoundly deaf. Why has this happened to our little perfect lives? Which way do we turn? How can we fix this? Now!

Looking back on these painful early days last year it's not possible to ignore the miracle that has happened since her "switch-on" in early December 2008. We were so encouraged by the countless success stories we saw and met; cochlear implantees of all ages telling their stories and giving us so much hope that Kate had every chance of being the same. And now we are seeing it with our own eyes. Every response and chuckle to sound, every noise she makes, every new milestone, every new babble and understanding is something to be cherished and celebrated.

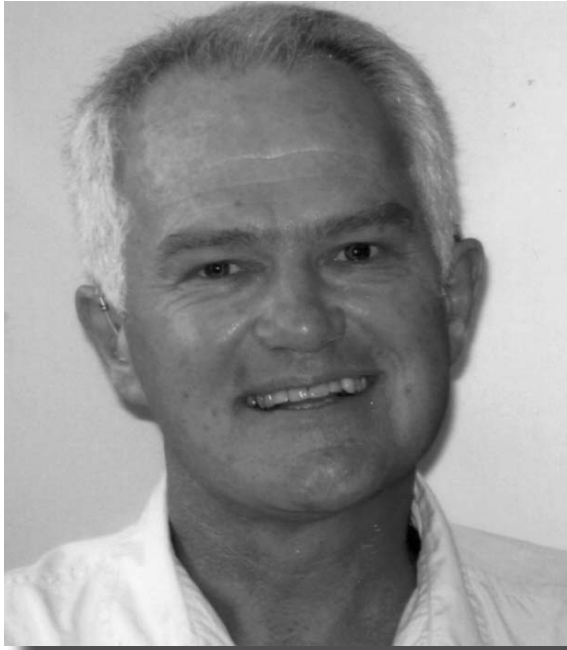
As I sit writing this I can hear Kate laughing and clapping her hands when Sarah, her mom, asks her to. She already understands so many words and instructions. Just today she started hugging herself when we say the word "cuddles". She knows who Daddy and Mommy are, looks at Granny and Granddad when asked, and shouts at Ruby the dog.

A new world of knowledge, experiences and lives opened to us as when we first enrolled at the Carel du Toit Centre, and then as part of the cochlear implant program at Tygerberg Hospital, one we had no idea even existed. Kate had her first cochlear implant at six months old and is due for the next one on the 11th May. On the 31st of May she'll be a year old. Sarah and I are so grateful and amazed at the passion and dedication and support of all who are part of helping us on our journey with Kate. We are motivated and excited about the future, but the road to teaching Kate to talk is not always smooth. Exhaustion and exasperation are often real.

The miracles we see make it all worth the effort. Again and again we are so thankful to God for the opportunity to now be part of this community, for the modern miracle of cochlear implants, and for the opportunity to make the diagnosis early. We can't wait to hear the words "Mama" and "Dada"!

*Sarah & Anthony Allwood*

## PATRICK HUTCHISON (No 350)



In my family most of us begin to lose our high frequency hearing in our mid-twenties. This progresses to profound deafness over the years. We live with it and get on with life. I think we genuinely do not realize how much hearing we lose as we graduate onto more powerful hearing aids as compared to those rendered suddenly deaf. We make do with our low frequency sounds. Increasingly we rely on body language and context to feed images into our memory bank for our daily communication. Within our limited strictly controlled environments we become adept way beyond simple explanation. After all, we hear with our brains. The ears are just wonderful means of conveying stimuli to our brains.

This form of communication demands considerable concentration. You being noticing photographs portraying angry scowls when in fact you are simply trying your very best to hear. What we are slower to admit or realize is that all this control, concentration and adaptation has far reaching social consequences. We do become more irritable and unpleasant. We avoid people and naturally people avoid us.

Two years back, a speech therapist friend, returned from a conference and handed me a big glossy brochure introducing Nucleus cochlear implants. When she said this was just what I needed I was deeply offended to see she genuinely meant it. I knew all about the Cochlear Implant Unit at my alma mater. This was for unfortunate children born without hearing. My hearing was far too competent to be linked with anything like this.

Is it vanity, pride or ignorance that makes us react the way I did? I am not sure. My ignorance is hard to excuse. The fine print always included adults with profound secondary hearing loss. Whereas I should have comprehended and embraced this data I seem to have shut it out again and again. When another audiologist friend proposed I consider a cochlear implant I felt cornered. The gamut described by Kubler Ross began hitting me. Shock. Anger. Denial. Bargaining. Acceptance. Depression. It happens in waves, repeating whenever the hard truth crosses your path. In many ways I was facing ruin. Eventually, to myself, I had to acknowledge how much I was struggling. A trial use of the best available hearing aids offered no more help than the older models. The prospect of changing my career, scaling down my life, handing breadwinner status to my wife, all loomed large. I was not yet fifty. I could scarcely think these my fears to myself, let alone voice them. Who could answer my questions as to my professional career?

I was reintroduced to a young man with bilateral cochlear implants I had last seen as a very deaf little patient. He seemed to be hearing better than me and he felt sure an implant would help my career. I contacted Michelle, head of our East London Carel du Toit Centre. She shared her son's experiences. She had a copy of the book by Beverly Biderman, an American cochlear implant recipient: "Wired For Sound: A Journey Into Hearing." This candid catalogue of research into the foibles of the hard of hearing made me blush. The acknowledgement of our struggles stung my eyes. The mention of medics with specially adapted stethoscopes filled me with great excitement. Doors so recently slamming shut started edging a little open.

Dr Paul Steyn, my ear specialist agreed it would be a good idea and referred me to Tygerberg Cochlear Implant Unit. I switched my medical aid to Discovery Health, the only medical aid that seems to appreciate the value of this technology and the priceless expertise assembled at Tygerberg. I looked Rod, the broker straight in the eye and declared I was being mercenary. I needed an implant asap. After ignoring that a few moments, he eyed me out. "Of course this is mercenary, but it makes perfect sense".

I flew to Cape Town for a few days to have the surgery at Vergelegen Clinic. The operation itself was never one of my fears, knowing I was in the most experienced hands. There honestly was no pain. Being a bit wobbly and easily

tired for a few days hardly came as a surprise. The flight home with middle ear pressure changes worried me, but quite unnecessarily.

I could not understand why at least two weeks of programming of the electrodes a month after the surgery was required. Surely fine tuning would not take so long. On the drive down for this, at the eleventh hour, I seriously wondered what if my expectations really had been too high. When we started I was hearing upper frequencies, high flute notes that I had long forgotten. Even more thrilling, the strange technology was delivering an alphabet of sounds that were “normal”! When switched on and asked how our voices sounded, they were normal, immediately. Each consonant, vowel and syllable was clear and distinct.

Initially the power of sensitivity is overwhelming. An olive thrush at the bottom of the garden interrupts the cricket commentary on the TV inside the lounge and this is a bit unbelievable. Then a

hadedah protests and is not as raucous as I would expect. I was enjoying the exercise of following the cricket without looking at the screen. I phoned our daughter Amelia. I have never spoken to Amelia on the phone before. My expectations were exceeded by at least half again. Have I just been exceptionally lucky? I should think not. Surely this tremendous gift awaits many individuals who, like me, need to be almost dragged kicking and squealing onto the block! What is it about us?

Lida took a photo of me: “You are a very special number, do you know?” After 23 years I imagined I was perhaps 5000. “You are number 350”. This to me is ineffably sad and shocking. Here we have intact priceless human capital of all the pioneering expertise and all they have been empowered to deliver amounts to one miracle a month. My fervent plea is that somehow the pace may be accelerated!

*Dr Patrick Hutchison,  
General Practitioner, East London*

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### **GIGI MONTALBANO (No 334)**



**W**ho thought this could be possible and that a cochlear implant would be so successful? Only God in His great wisdom and thus imparted the idea to man. It's a rather complicated issue, but with the faith in Christ it's the best thing for you, despite the volume of sounds to get used to again. It's a great relief compared to then. I give God thanks for giving them wisdom and for being able to help those in need of them. Thanks also to my doctors and their team for giving their time, skills and devotion.

### **BRADWIN MCKAY (No 345)**



**B**radwin, was born on 2 September 2005 at 28 weeks and weighed a mere 1,2kg at birth. At his first birthday we were told that Bradwin had a hearing problem, and were referred to the Carel du Toit Centre. There he was diagnosed as profoundly deaf in both ears, He was then fitted with hearing aids. The amplification from the hearing aids was not enough for him to develop spoken language and a cochlear implant was recommended

Given this news we had to give in quotations to our medical aid to see how much they would cover of this very expensive operation. His father's medical aid, Polmed

would cover 80% of this operation. We started fundraising as we still needed a 20%. After months of fundraising we finally got all the money together and Bradwin got his implant on 1 December 2008. His processor was switched on, on 12 January 2009, and he could hear!

to his name, something he never used to do. He is saying a few words and it can only get better, with lots of hard work and dedication. We give thanks to God, all the doctors, audiologists, teachers and everyone who helped with the fundraising.

Now 3 months after the switch-on Bradwin responds

*Benito and Gerchwin McKay*

### **SONÉ CROUCH (No 351)**



Because of a genetic hearing loss I had to start wearing hearing aids in both ears about two years (2007) ago. Gradually I struggled to follow conversations and at the end of last year (2008) my hearing aids became of no use to me. Through dedication and perseverance I passed Grade 11 and a cochlear implant was considered. Hearing that a cochlear implant was my only option to fulfill my dream to become a social worker, made me so happy. I received a cochlear implant through Tygerberg Hospital in my right ear in March 2009.

Everything went well after the implant operation and when it was time for the switch-on, I was amazed at how quickly I could pick up sounds. I could start hearing sounds I had forgotten, like the elevator arriving, footsteps of people, my voice has become much clearer so that my pronunciation of words is better. I used to talk loudly which made my mother feel embarrassed, but after the cochlear implant I have started talking softer. I can hear an approaching car from far now, and can react more quickly now. My family's voices are becoming clearer everyday. I can hear them talking downstairs and I know who is talking. I have more confidence now and I'm grateful for the opportunity I've received.

### **SASHIN MOODLEY (No 346)**



**W**hen Sashin was born in George on the 19th April 2005, it was the most exciting time of my life. Little did I know that the next 4 years of his short life would be the most difficult and challenging time as well.

At the age of 1 year, we had discovered that Sashin had a bilateral sensorineural hearing loss and that he would need to wear hearing aids for the rest of his life. The first two weeks were the most difficult, as I had to come to terms with my 'baby boy' being severely impaired for the rest of his life. I kept going over and over all the things that occurred from the time I fell pregnant, searching and trying to find answers as to how and why he was severely hearing impaired.

Three weeks later we were off to Cape Town to the Carel du Toit Centre, where Sashin was fitted with hearing aids. We also learnt about causes of hearing loss in children. I still did not find the answers I was looking for. But as time went by, I decided that the best way to handle this very difficult situation, is to put the "why and how" behind me and focus on helping my child to reach his full potential. We started visiting the Centre every 3-4 months for parent guidance and started seeing an improvement in his speech and language development. In July 2008 we were "hit" with more shocking news!

Sashin was now diagnosed as having a deteriorating hearing loss and would need cochlear implants.

In October 2008, after many scans, hearing tests and evaluations, Sashin was found to be a candidate for a cochlear implant. I approached my medical aid, who at first only agreed to pay R33 000-00 towards the cost of the operation. I tried the medical aid again, pleading Sashin's case and applied for ex-gratia. After about a month, Nedgroup Medical Aid decided that they would pay the full cost of the operation.

On the 8th December 2008, Sashin had his bilateral cochlear implant operation. The implants were "switched on" on the 12th January 2009. We were

quite pleased to see that he responded well. He had to adjust gradually to the new sounds that he was hearing.

It's been 4 months now since his "switch-on" and we are elated to see the progress in Sashin, especially how his speech and language has developed. We are now living in Port Elizabeth and Sashin attends a good school and sees a wonderful speech therapist twice a week.

To all those moms and dads who are feeling despondent, never give up! Believe in the Lord always! He will watch over you and bless your family abundantly, if you just believe. Keep believing, keep praying and never give up! God bless  
Deshnee Moodley

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### **DAWOOD ADAMS (No 343)**



**D**awood is one of a twin and born prematurely on the 19th August 2005. As we were always busy with the twins and the other siblings we never noticed that Dawood couldn't hear. At 1 year 2 months we found out that he was profoundly deaf. We never imagined something like this could happen to us. First he had to go for grommets. After doing some tests we were told that our son was 100% deaf. He was then fitted with hearing aids. We were then sent to the Carel du Toit Centre where deaf children learn to speak to get some guidance of how to communicate with him. After a few months, it became clear that the hearing aids were not much of a benefit and Dawood became a candidate for a cochlear implant. At first everything was very strange and new to us but we managed with the help of family and mostly friends. We had to raise funds for the operation seeing that we are not members of a medical aid. It was tough on us but we went that extra mile for Dawood, because we didn't want him to be the only one of our four kids not to be able to hear. On 12 November 2008 he received his cochlear implant at the Tygerberg Cochlear Implant

Unit. It's been 5 months since the operation and his sounds and babbling are becoming more. We are really blessed and it's a joy to have Dawood in our lives.

*Ebrahim and Faezah*

### **ISABELLA PHILP (No 349)**



**F**inding out that our baby Isabella Anne was profoundly deaf came as a shock but not devastating. Isabella is a very active, adorable and confident child who makes those around her happy. She is seldom difficult and brightens up our lives and all those around her in Zimbabwe. After a long and stressful day at work I arrive home to see our little bundle of joy reaching out with a big smile on her face. This makes me forget the tough day as I get absorbed in her aura of happiness and love. There are children and families who have much worse ordeals and living in Zimbabwe we are surrounded with poverty and starving children. This puts everything into context.

As parents we obviously want what is best for Isabella and we have pursued every avenue we know to find



the best. Ultimately, this led us to Cape Town where we enrolled Isabella in the Cochlear Implant Program. After numerous tests it showed that she was a perfect candidate and would very likely benefit from the cochlear implant. As is protocol with the program we had to have hearing aids fitted to explore the opportunity of the aids being sufficient for her to develop speech.

We had the hearing aids fitted and Isabella was not fazed by them, we and the doctors were surprised. Our little angel was going to demonstrate how determined she was ten days later when she, all of a sudden, decided that she did not want these things in her ears. The battle began and more often than not she won. We were concerned that we would have a similar problem with

the cochlear implant but believed that because she will benefit from it she will in fact ask for it in the morning.

Isabella has been through both her operations, first the right and then the left implantation, and at the age of one year and four months we would not be more pleased with the results. Isabella is a confident and intelligent little girl who has already started to say her first word four months after her first cochlear implant operation. The most clear of her words being "bye" which she says with a smile and a wave as she leaves the room.

The Cochlear Implant Team has helped our little family realize a miracle and has given us new dreams and aspirations for our child.

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## JOLENE SAMUELS (No 340)



**E**k is 'n professionele verpleegkundige in 'n provinsiale hospitaal toe ek MDR (weerstandige tuberkulose) in 2005 opgedoen het. Op sigself was dit 'n verskriklike skok, en ek moes toe in 'n TB hospitaal opgeneem word en in isolasie geplaas word. Ek is op MDR behandeling geplaas en in 'n maand en 'n half was ek heeltemaal doof. Dit was 'n verdere skok en ek moes verneem dat die gehoorverlies onomkeerbaar is. Ek was verpletter, my lewe het onherroeplik verander. Ek was toe 34 jaar oud en my lewe het nog voor my gelê, maar in 'n oogwink was niks meer dieselfde nie. Dinge wat ek as vanselfsprekend aanvaar het, soos aan gesprekke deelneem, telefoon antwoord, radioluister en TV kyk was iets wat ek nooit weer soos voorheen sou ervaar nie. Gehoorapparate het ook nie gehelp nie en ek was later in 'n wêreld van my eie sonder klank. Toe is ek verwys vir evaluasie vir 'n kogleêre inplanting en ek is as 'n ideale kandidaat beskou.

Daar was egter 'n struikelblok, die TB het my regter long aangetas en dit het 'n operasie geverg om die aangetasde deel te verwyder. Die operasie kon egter net plaasvind indien ek vry was van die TB. Dit het 'n jaar in die hospitaal gekos voordat ek gesond was. Om te kommunikeer was baie moeilik. Ek kon nie liplees nie aangesien ek in isolasie was en almal wat by my kamer ingekom het moes maskers dra. My enigste effektiewe manier van kommunikeer was pen en papier.

My onvergeetlikste dag was 8/8/2008 toe my oudioloog die operasiedatum van 15 Oktober 2008 bevestig het. Ek kan nie beskryf hoe ek gevoel het nie, opgewonde, ekstasies, bietjie bang, maar my geloof was sterk.

Die aanskakeling was fantasties, maar ook nie maklik nie. Eers was die klanke te hard, maar geleidelik het ek klank begin identifiseer.

Dis nou 8 maande later en my hele lewe het verander, net ten goede. Alle eer aan ons Hemelse Vader. Ek kan voeltjies buite hoor fluit, motors in die straat hoor ry, kan TV kyk, die radio hoor speel, gesprekke voer, die reën hoor val, ag alles kan ek nou hoor. Die beste was om my 3-jarige oue seuntjie die eerste keer te hoor praat; hy was 8 maande toe ek doof geword het. Ek vergeet soms dat ek inplantings het so duidelik kan ek hoor.

Ek kan nie genoeg dankie sê vir die tweede kans wat God aan my geskenk het nie. Ek het so baie verloor, maar dit wat ek nou ontvang het is van onskatbare waarde.

# GENEROUS DONATIONS 2008

In 2008 two children each received a cochlear implant through the generous donation of the HARRY CROSSLEY FOUNDATION. Kyle Soales, aged 15 years and Katelyn Coe, aged 3 years.

Kyle wrote the following in a thank you letter to the Foundation " The cochlear implant has made my life much easier as I experience different sounds every day. Before I couldn't hear people call me from behind, but now I can. I must say the Harry Crossley Foundation has been very generous and kind to sponsor me with this opportunity and I am grateful for that. I hope that they will continue to make young children's dreams come true. It made such a huge difference in my life".

After Katelyn was born she had a very rocky start. After two heart surgeries and six brain surgeries, her parents also discovered that she had a hearing loss. Her cochlear implant operation was on the 4th June 2008.

She is now attending the beginners class at the Carel du Toit Centre and is making good progress.



Harry Crossley Foundation trustees Ronald Paterson and Linda Whitfield with Kyle Soales and Katelyn Coe

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## EAST LONDON SATELLITE COCHLEAR IMPLANT PROGRAM

Three cochlear implant candidates received a cochlear implant through Frere Hospital and the Eastern Cape Department of Health. Their surgeries were done at Tygerberg Hospital by Professor James Looek in November 2008. The audiologist at Frere Hospital, Adri Schlichting did the initial programming and the rest of the audiological management. She is responsible for all the cochlear implant users in the East London area. Many of the patients implanted at Tygerberg Hospital who reside in that area are now taken care of by Adri. She has a case load of 24 recipients, all of whom were implanted at Tygerberg Hospital.

One of the children who received a cochlear implant, Ayaka Soga lost his hearing when he was 2½ years old. He received the implant when he was 3 years 11 months old.



Ayaka Soga and his mother



Bongani Rana and his mother

Bongani lost his hearing when he was 13 years old due to meningitis. Despite his profound hearing loss in both ears he passed Grade 12 in a mainstream school. He also completed a 3 year course in Sports Management and Coaching in 2002. He is now employed at the Police Department.



Kyran Bellairs and her mother

Kyran was born with a hearing loss in both ears. Her mother attended parent guidance at the East London Carel du Toit Centre to help Kyran to develop spoken language. Her progress was fair but the hearing aids did not give her enough amplification to develop spoken language at an accepted rate. The activation of the implant was very upsetting for Kyran, but she is adapting to the new sound and making good progress.

## BATTERIES: LET'S LOOK AFTER OUR ENVIRONMENT

**IT IS A SOBERING THOUGHT TO IMAGINE HOW MANY BATTERIES ARE THROWN AWAY BY COCHLEAR IMPLANT USERS.**

**YOUR USED BATTERIES CAN BE HANDED IN AT YOUR LOCAL PICK 'N PAY SUPERMARKET AND THEY WILL DISPOSE OF THEM APPROPRIATELY.**

**ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN COLLECT YOUR BATTERIES IN A CONTAINER AND GIVE THEM TO YOUR AUDIOLOGIST WHEN YOU ATTEND APPOINTMENTS. WE WILL THEN DELIVER THEM TO A PICK 'N PAY OUTLET.**

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## WHO SHALL I CONTACT WHEN?.....

**My speech processor is faulty. Contact your audiologist. A new speech processor has a three year warranty after which time it can be repaired at a standard rate of R3 350.00.**

**My coil/cable is broken. It has a one year warrantee and if it should break before the year's end, contact your audiologist. After the one year period, contact SOUTHERN ENT at 021-667 4460 or email: [marie.f@southernear.com](mailto:marie.f@southernear.com). Make sure that you always have a spare cable/coil!**

**Rechargeable batteries and the Dry & Store Unit have a one year warranty, so contact your audiologist during the one year period, and thereafter Southern ENT.**

**Battery holders, accessories and accessory cables have a 3 month warranty. Contact Southern ENT if it is faulty and you want to buy new spares.**

**Dry bricks: when your supply of dry bricks is getting low, please contact Southern ENT.**

**Information of prices for insurance purposes: please contact Southern ENT.**

**To order or buy disposable batteries contact Southern ENT or the practice of Deidré Stroebel at 021 930 3136. We recommend that you use the Power One Implant Plus or Rayovac batteries. We do not recommend using batteries from chemists or other shops, because they are not appropriate and it is not a cost saving.**

## TABLE VIEW BRANCH OF "HEAR2DAY"

In 2007 a support group for adults with hearing loss was established in the Southern Suburbs. This group has grown steadily to include members of all ages. A general meeting is held every six weeks at Constantiaberg Hospital and an executive committee meets regularly. The primary aim of the executive committee is to develop a website and brochures, a constitution, and to investigate, motivate and promote the rights of persons with hearing loss. The group is to formally launch in November 2009. For further information about this group, please contact Jenny Perold at [jperold@pgwc.gov.za](mailto:jperold@pgwc.gov.za)

Following the success of the first Hear2Day group in the Southern Suburbs, we are in the process of starting a similar group in the Table View/Parklands area. The group will be led by Elbé Boshoff (Audiologist) and Diane Bell. At this point we are still in the planning phase. How we structure the group will depend on the response we get from interested parties. We very much would like to accommodate as many age groups as possible (children, teenagers, young and older adults and if there is a need, parents of children with hearing loss). If you are interested in joining the group please contact Elbé Boshoff at [elbe@absamail.co.za](mailto:elbe@absamail.co.za) or on 021 556 9265. If you prefer, you can also stop by her practice on 13 Pentz Drive, Table View (across from Table View Virgin Active).

## Get together

On the 1st November 2008 a group of adults using cochlear implants met for lunch at fellow user's home, Maurien Rautenbach. In addition to the delicious dishes brought and shared by all, the lunch gave a chance for stories, experiences and advices to be shared. Wine and laughter followed as did the sense of support and shared journeying of all those gathered. Existing friendships were strengthened and new ones started



Back: Maurien Rautenbach, Marilyn Goldberg, Rosi Adendorff, Bennie de Villiers.  
Front: Hélene Nieuwoudt, Toni Leijte, & Mary Lavender.

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## LOVE WAS IN THE AIR!

**VALENTINES DAY 2009 SAW THE COCHLEAR IMPLANT UNIT HOSTING IT'S ANNUAL; GET-TOGETHER FOR PATIENTS AND STAFF. THE BRING-AND -BRAAI EVENT TOOK PLACE AT THE CAREL DU TOIT CENTRE AMIDST A SEA OF RED BALLOONS AND BRIGHTLY COLOURED SHADES OF RED AND PINK CLOTHING AS MANY GOT INTO THE SPIRIT OF THE DAY. THE EVENT WAS VERY WELL ATTENDED. PROF. JAMES LOOCK, HEAD OF ENT AT TYGERBERG HOSPITAL WAS THE MASTER OF CEREMONIES, AND INTRODUCED THOSE PATIENTS WHO HAD BEEN ASKED TO SHARE THEIR STORIES. RICH AND**

**VARIED EXPERIENCES UNFOLDED AS SOME CHILDREN, ADULTS AND A PARENT OF A NEWLY IMPLANTED BABY SPOKE. ALL COULD IDENTIFY WITH THE STORIES SHARED AND TEARS OF UNDERSTANDING WERE SEEN ON MANY FACES. THE DAY PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR NEW AND OLD USERS AND THEIR FAMILIES TO MEET AND TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER. MANY CONVERSATIONS WERE STRUCK UP AROUND A BRAAI, ON THE PLAYGROUND OR RELAXING UNDER SHADY TREES. THERE WAS A TANGIBLE SENSE OF CAMARADERIE IN THE AIR AND FUN WAS HAD BY ALL.**