

LISTEN UP!

**Johannesburg Cochlear Implant
News letter
Summer Edition 2011**

JCIC ADMIN HOURS



Over the festive season JCIC will be open until the 16th of December. There will be an audiologist available on call should there be any emergency. Her number will be available on the office phone. There will be no one available on the 23rd-26th December and the 1st-2nd of January 2012. We officially open again from the 3rd of January 2012.

Contact numbers: 011 4826141 or 011 3566510

ASSISTIVE DEVICES



HearAbility has recently partnered with Bo Edin (a Swedish Company which manufactures the Univox range of loop systems). They have also partnered with Bellman & Symfon® (a Swedish Company which exports their products to 45 countries) and have become the sole distributor in Africa of their personal amplification devices (Maxi, Mino,

Classic and Domino Pro) <http://www.bellman.se/audio/> as well as their Visit 868 alerting systems (<http://www.bellman.se/web/page.php?catid=179>).

HearAbility's goal is to improve the life of hearing impaired people by ensuring that they, through the use of various assistive technologies (both assistive listening and assistive living devices), are able to live a high functioning life.

JCIC is the sole reseller of Bellman products in Gauteng. We have demo units of the whole range. Give us a call and come and try the products available to you.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW RECIPIENTS



Congratulations and good luck to our 2011 recipients implanted since our last newsletter:

Adults: Tracey-Anne Burnham (2nd ear); Frans Greeff; Johan Vosloo; Dyllan Taylor; Anne English; Alfred Ntshangase (2nd Ear); Doreen Davies

Children: Lindiwe Mngese; Solene Sagna; Nkosikhona Malaza; Pippa Janse Van Rensburg; Blessed Chikarakara (2nd Ear)

LOOKING BACK



Recently a parent of one of our recipients commented that her child had received her first implant ten years ago and

reminded me that one of their questions at the time of implant was "Where will we be in 10 years". Some of our CI users have shared their stories with us.

Jeanne is 16yrs old. She had a progressive hearing loss that caused social and emotional difficulties and having tried various therapy techniques her parents introduced her to horse riding. This was to become her passion. Her mother has shared her story of Jeanne's bilateral cochlear implants (edited).

At the end of 2000, Jeanne's hearing had deteriorated so much that she became a candidate for a cochlear implant. It was a lonely time and we had no idea what the future for Jeanne would be as a "deaf" person. We had no idea what had caused the hearing loss and no way of telling what the future would hold for Jeanne. Would we need to replace the cochlear, how would she hear? What would her speech sound like? The concern of the operation for our child, who was quite slight, was draining. We became emotionally reliant on people like Wendy Deverson, the audiologist, and Estelle Roberts who assisted us all the way, and have remained part of our lives even today.


Jeanne mainstreamed after two years at remedial school to "catch up" on vocabulary. Her social interaction improved remarkably and we watched her become a well-adjusted child.

On 1 November 2002, an audiogram indicated a further drop in high frequency hearing in her left ear. Jeanne wrote a passionate plea requesting a second implant. Despite our reservations (*Jeanne had good residual hearing in the low frequencies*), we all decided to do the second cochlear implant

during 2005. Jeanne's implant was done on 22 February 2005, on her 11th birthday, having just started a new school which was most supporting.


Jeanne left home with her horse, to go to boarding school in Mpumalanga at the beginning of 2010 where she has grown ever more confident and happy. Her bilateral implants have given her the freedom to be like any other young adult. She wears her implants with confidence. Her recent upgrade in processors has further refined her hearing, which meant she "re-listens" to her favorite music and discovers it not so favorite after all!

Recently Jeanne has been recognized for academic achievement; she has been selected to ride for Mpumalanga in the South African National Championships during December 2011 jumping 1.10m and has won a number of prestigious riding championships in Gauteng. Jeanne won the Mpumalanga Cansa Debutante award 2011. The minor adjustment she is required to make is a small price to pay. She recently rode and won an entire jumping course in pouring rain, without her processors, which reminded her how much she takes hearing for granted with her implants. She prefers texting to voice calls (as do most of her peers) as she finds it difficult to hear via telephone and in situations with background noise. She apologized saying "I'm deaf" and laughs when people think she is just kidding.

 Dimitri is 25 years old and received his cochlear implant in 2003. One of his family's frustrations with the process is the difficulty they have had with their medical aid when applying for a second implant or upgrade. Their medical aid scheme has changed name and administrators over the

years and each time the benefits for cochlear implant change. Does this sound familiar? The cochlear implant teams in this country understand the critical role that medical aids play in the CI process and try to educate and motivate the medical aid schemes to improve their benefits. To this end we have invited people from the companies to attend operations and switch-ons, but would appreciate any ideas you may have to promote CI.

Dimitri has benefitted so much from the cochlear which he had at the age of 17; it was really the best thing for him. He matriculated at Saheti School, went on to study multimedia at the University of Johannesburg, obtained his B.Tech degree and is now a web developer at a company who think the world of him. He works very hard, but loves his work. He says having the implant was the right decision!!

 Robbie Robinson is 83 years old and received his Nucleus implant in 2004. He started losing his hearing at the age of 30 when he was a research scientist and his work involved a lot of travel and meetings. He managed to cope with hearing aids and lipreading and continued to work as a consultant when he retired. Then at the age of 70 years he was diagnosed with macular degeneration which caused severe visual impairment which meant he could no longer lipread effectively. He received his cochlear implant in Pretoria and has described his "switch-on".

I will never forget this tune up session with the wonderful staff of the department. This was done note by note of the 22 electrodes now feeding an electrical signal to my auditory nerve. I was ecstatic with every note and when it came to the last one at the highest frequency above 4000 Hz, I must have had an agonized expression

on my face. The computer operator and the others watching were worried.

"Was that painful" they asked, "No" I replied.

Do it again it was like an angel from heaven singing to me for the first time in 40 years."

I knew immediately that it had been a success. My wife spoke to me. She sounded like Minnie Mouse shouting into a tin can.

"Don't shout" I said.

"I am not" she replied "I am talking softly".

I knew that I had been reborn. As I left the department I was overwhelmed by the traffic noise, but I heard the birds singing for the first time in many decades. I arrived at my home to be met by my two granddaughters and I heard them talking to me normally for the first time and heard them laughing. I was back with friends and family talking and laughing with them. And in spite of my poor eyesight was back in a living world. For a second lease of life. Now 10 years later it has become part of me forever.

A TEAM MEMBERS PERSPECTIVE



We asked one of our longest serving team members for comments on their cochlear implant experience over the past 19 years:

In the early 1990s, with the only cochlear implant program in South Africa situated in Stellenbosch, it was clear that we would need to establish our own program here in Johannesburg. The idea of establishing and implant program originated from discussions in the private practice ENT journal club in Johannesburg. Paddi Roux and I

were privileged to be given the task to establish this program. It would be a combination of surgery in private practice and rehab at Wits University Speech and Language department.

For me, this had been the realization of a dream to treat deaf children which originated from my 1st visit as an ENT registrar to the Unit's for Hearing and Language Impaired Children. It has certainly been an amazing journey and with the help and support of so many, really far too numerous to enumerate in such a limited space, we today have an implant program we can really be proud of with its nerve centre at the Johannesburg Cochlear Implant Centre and surgery being performed at a number of hospitals in Johannesburg.

It has certainly been a most rewarding and humbling experience to have been associated with the development of our Johannesburg Cochlear Implant Program over the past 19 years.

Maurice Hockman

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF TECHNOLOGY



Most of us are involved with cochlear implants either as users, family or team members and we appreciate this wonderful gift that advances in technology have made possible. In addition many of us have access to cellphones, iPods, iPads and numerous other gadgets that can make our lives easier and more exciting and increase the speed of communication.

BUT do we sometimes forget that communication involves more than sharing information. Have you ever looked around you in a

restaurant or meeting and counted the number of people either busy on their cellphones or with the phone right next to them just in case a message should come though?

Effective communication depends on the communicative partners taking time out to share the experience- skills that our speech therapists spend time teaching the young children - good eye contact, joint attention and turn taking. Sometimes as adults we forget this!

These holidays take time out to enjoy the sights and sounds around you and spend quality time with the people you care about. Lift your eyes from the computer or phone screen and look at the trees and the stars, listen to the sounds of nature and children playing rather than the beep of technology and take time to really listen to what people are saying to you. These holidays don't be a slave to technology, but let your technology work for you. Remember you can only hear with your cochlear implant if you choose to listen!

Don't forget to send in your comments, questions and suggestions and stories! Please share them with us at admin@jic.co.za or 2711482-6141 and we will include them or reply to them in our next edition.