



CHIP Creates Confidence

By: Nina Chen

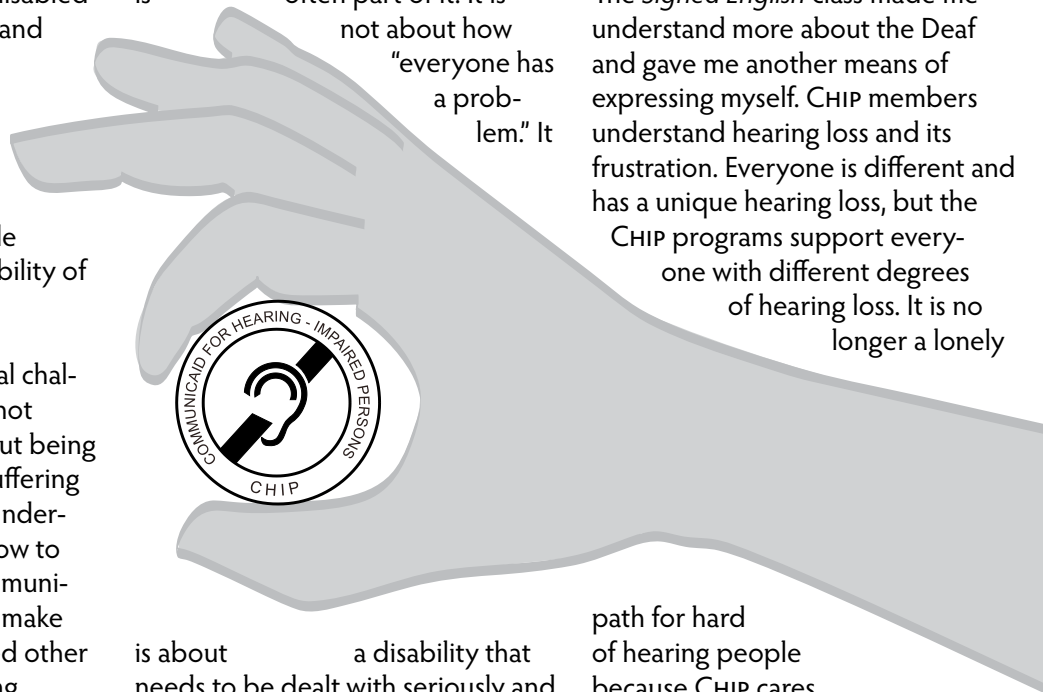
I AM NINA CHEN, a volunteer who has worked on the database in our CHIP office since last August. As a hard of hearing person who went to regular school, I was always taught to cope with the normal world instead of being trained how to deal with my hearing loss and disabilities. Due to lack of education about disability and the shame in the family and society, often a disabled person may not be treated and trained with the right tools for his/her disability. The problem is not that the family doesn't love the disabled person. The real problem is that some people do not understand the disability of hearing loss.

Hearing loss is also a physical challenge and health issue. It is not about self-pity. It is not about being laid back or being lazy or suffering a mental illness. It is about understanding hearing loss and how to cope with it. It is about communication. Hearing aids cannot make hearing perfect and we need other tools to optimize our hearing.

Maybe sometimes we worry that when we use some special devices or closed captions, others would think we are not the same. However, people need to understand that hard of hearing people understand better with closed captions and feel safer with assistive devices. The tools are necessary and they are not

something that should make you feel ashamed.

I've realized that it is not that hearing people don't care about hearing loss, but they don't understand hearing loss until they encounter this issue either physically or professionally. As we get older, we are more worried about our health. Disability is often part of it. It is not about how "everyone has a problem." It



is about a disability that needs to be dealt with seriously and professionally.

I first joined CHIP in 2010. I had attended the HEAR sessions and the assistive device workshops. I also had participated in the *Speechreading* and *Signed English* classes. Here at CHIP, I finally found some support for my hearing loss.

Since I never went to any special school, CHIP's speechreading class

teacher, Eva Basch, evaluated that my lip reading skill was at an advanced level. CHIP's members made me feel comfortable to ask for assistive devices such as a portable phone, flashing lights, and a fire alarm system (some devices of which I obtained from MAB-Mackay).

The *Signed English* class made me understand more about the Deaf and gave me another means of expressing myself. CHIP members understand hearing loss and its frustration. Everyone is different and has a unique hearing loss, but the CHIP programs support everyone with different degrees of hearing loss. It is no longer a lonely

path for hard of hearing people because CHIP cares.

CHIP is a great place for people to cope with hearing loss and get support from one another. I feel more confident because I know there are people like me who have the same issues. Each member also has other problems, but coping with hearing loss brings us together. We are in the same boat, as hard of hearing people. Please come and join us—you will surely learn and benefit from CHIP! ◀