

HEAR HEAR MAGAZINE



- Emphasizing the *pawsitive!*
- Spring Programs 2018
- March 3rd, 2018
World Hearing Day



**SPRING
2018**



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CHIP Communicaid for Hearing Impaired Persons

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by Heidi Wager

A Word from the Executive Director

The last several months have definitely been interesting ones at CHIP!

In July, we held our annual two-day staff and board retreat, during which time we examined how CHIP functions and discussed future directions for our strategic plan. It was a time for introspection and appreciation. At the end, it was determined that the executive director would focus more on fundraising, since the future of CHIP depends on diversifying our funding sources. To make that feasible, the new position of Program Manager was created.

We developed new tools and we launched our first online fundraising campaign. We sought out information through COCo (The Centre for Community Organizations) and various webinars and the results to date have been encouraging.

It has become clear that CHIP needs to consider new orientations in programming to meet the needs of our current members and to continue attracting new ones. New programs might also help CHIP to grow in new directions and obtain funding from new sources.

One area we are very interested in exploring is the development of a program to address the prevention of noise-induced hearing loss. From overly-loud

personal devices to deafening concerts and stressful workplace noise, the potential impact of excessive noise is huge. We have decided to allocate some time and resources into investigating how such a prevention program could be carried out.

In November, we were informed that we would need to move from our present offices at the end of April, due to limited space in the building with the restructuring of the rehabilitation centers. Immediately, meetings with the board and staff were

“**We can stay in our present location for at least the whole of 2018 and possibly longer.**”

held, with much deliberation about possible solutions and ways forward. The new reality of relocating and paying for rent was a sobering one. It was also hard to imagine not continuing with the close association we have enjoyed with MAB-Mackay for many years.

After viewing some properties, we were even more concerned at the costs that would be involved. However, we are pleased to say that we have been given a reprieve, time-wise. We can stay in our present location for at least the whole of 2018 and possibly longer. This extension of time will allow us to look more thoroughly into other possibilities and continue to raise funds. We are very grateful!

In December we welcomed members and their families to our CHIP Holiday Brunch, where a great team of volunteers prepared a veritable feast of breakfast foods (with sweets brought by our members!). It was a real pleasure to see so many of us in attendance along with friends, children and grandchildren.

In the next months, we will continue to work on plans for our eventual relocation and how we will raise the funds we need to continue to offer the wonderful programs that we have and the ones we hope to offer. Thanks so much to all our members and partners for your support and your enthusiasm.



Getting around

Volunteer driver, Jennifer



SUPPORT FOR GETTING AROUND

WE HEAR YOU! We have heard many of our members express great difficulty finding safe and reliable transportation services to appointments or activities. We contacted some local community partners to discover more about what services are available for you. If you need help to get access to any of these services please let us know and we will be glad to help you through the process or to get more information. CHIP has access to a list of other agencies (by community) that offer transportation support for those with mobility or other issues.

For Your Information

New Transportation Service N.D.G. Senior Citizens' Council (NDGSCC)

The N.D.G. Senior Citizens' Council (NDGSCC) is expanding its medical transportation and accompaniment program. All residents of N.D.G., Montreal West and the Bailey/Cavendish sectors of Cote St. Luc who receive a low-to-modest revenue, and are aged 50 and over, are eligible. The service offers a drive to any health-related appointment or service/program and an accompanying attendant is also available. Individuals who are currently experiencing challenges within the health and social service system are offered advocacy from an experienced social worker. For further information please contact Anne at 514-487-1311. The office is located in the Montreal West United Church.

The N.D.G. Senior Citizens' Council is a nonprofit community organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of adults (50+) by encouraging mutual aid and civic engagement. The NDGSCC aims to lessen the impact of social and economic isolation through programs and services, outreach, advocacy, research, joint action and education. The NDGSCC works to address the underlying causes of poverty and social exclusion by supporting social justice initiatives that represent the real changes required to promote dignity, not charity. These initiatives offer its members a sense of belonging and restore hope to individuals who might otherwise remain invisible in society.



ABOVAS helps vulnerable West Island residents (Dorval to Senneville) who require accompanied transport to get to vital medical appointments on the Island of Montreal. The resident must have a need for accompagnement owing to mobility or cognitive issues, and transport to medical appointments only is considered. The volunteer will drive the person round-trip and stay at the appointment (in the waiting room). While the drivers are all volunteers, there is a fee to cover the use of their car. Abovas requires 7-10 days notice for scheduling. For more information check out the website at www.abovas.com or call 514 694-3838.



Mary Taylor Sanders

STM Transport Adapté (Paratransit)

STM Paratransit services are provided collectively, door-to-door, and are based on a reservations-only system. The service is only available to admissible customers who meet the criteria stated in the Ministère des Transports du Québec's Paratransit Eligibility Policy. See <https://www.stm.info/en/paratransit/admission/eligibility-criteria> for the type of handicapping conditions or mobility limitations that will be considered for eligibility. The service runs from 6 a.m. (weekdays and weekends) until 12:30 a.m. (1:30 on weekends). The service covers medical or other appointments, shopping, leisure or social activities. The fare is payable by cash, bus tickets or a pass (Opus ID card). The usage can be occasional or recurrent and having a travel companion is optional. STM is committed to arriving for pick up within 30 minutes of the appointed time.

For more information, please visit <https://www.stm.info/en/paratransit/about-paratransit/what-paratransit> or call 514 280-8211.



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We offer solutions to help you maintain your independence. Just tell us what you need and we will help make your daily routine easier.



Hello, my name is Zarina Mehta, owner of *Réservation Solutions Plus* and I can help you find the best solution for your situation. Bilingual (English/French), I have been working in the personal care field for the past 15 years. References and full CV available upon request.



We can take you to doctors' appointments, help with follow-ups and follow through with the doctors' recommendations.

Zarina Mehta

Tel: 514.822.2881 • Cell: 514.971.2881
mehtazarina58@gmail.com

HELPING MAKE LIFE EASIER



Learn what you can do to protect hearing!

March 3rd, 2018

WORLD HEARING DAY



Hearing safety
for your future.

Visit the CHIP website for
more information on Noise
Induced Hearing Loss and
Promotional material.

www.hearhear.org



For more information,
please check
www.who.int/world-hearing-day



AGM

Annual General Meeting

Open Meeting

May 30th 2018

5:30 - 8:30 pm

Layton Hall Gym

7000 Sherbrooke St. West
Montreal, QC
H4B 1R3

Dinner will be served, followed by the award ceremony, and then a very special surprise for members in attendance.

Not to be missed !!!

Doors open at 5:00 pm for registration

Captioning will be provided and ASL interpreting will be available, only if requested by May 1, 2018

RSVP by May 11, 2018 (4pm)

Nina Davis 514-488-5552 ext 4500
info@hearhear.org and the CHIP cell 514-797-2447



A suggested donation of \$10.00 would be greatly appreciated.
Tax receipts are available for donations of \$25.00 or more.



SPRING PROGRAMS 2018

If you are interested in coming to CHIP's speechreading classes or information sessions, but do not have transportation, the N.D.G. Senior Citizens' Council transportation program can help. We have forms at the CHIP office and we can help you complete the forms and send them in.

REGISTRATION IS MANDATORY FOR ALL STUDENTS before attending any of the classes/workshops. Please register early, as spaces are limited. Priorities will be given to previously-registered students. Registration is on a first come, first served basis. Please note that if there are fewer than 5 students registered, that class will be postponed to the next session.

TO REGISTER FOR CLASSES/WORKSHOPS: Complete the registration form and return it by mail, fax or e-mail to info@hearhear.org, or in person at the CHIP office. Registration forms are available at our office, and **now on our website** www.hearhear.org or by request for a mailed or electronic copy.

Please inform us if you need an assistive listening device or any other accommodations for the classes/workshops. We will try to accommodate your specific needs.

Computer Classes Basics (8 Classes) - \$25

March 26th to May 28th, 1 pm - 3 pm

Topics covered will include computer basics (computer parts, how to turn on/off), computer maintenance (Anti-Malware/Anti-Virus Software) how to safely connect to and use the internet, how to protect your information online, how to safely use email, and how to use social media.

OUTREACH PROGRAM

CHIP is on the move!

We will bring CHIP's experts to you. This program is for our members, partners, the general public and professionals. All of our programs are customized to your needs.

Our Programs include:

- Professional training and development
- General information sessions
- Public awareness and accessibility

To book an Outreach Workshop
514 488-5552 ext. 4500
info@hearhear.org
www.hearhear.org

FREE
plus
INFORMATIVE

IDEAL FOR HOUSES OF WORSHIP, COMMUNITY CENTRES & RESIDENCES

Daytime Info Sessions - FREE with membership from 10 am - 12 pm

April 9th - (NDG Site) **Hearing Aids - Care & Maintenance:**

Information on the different types of hearing aids available and proper care and maintenance of hearing aid devices.

April 12th - (NDG Site) **Tinnitus:**

Information on Tinnitus (ringing in the ears) and how to access services for support and management.

April 23rd - (NDG Site) **MAB/Mackay Service for Assistive Technologies (SAT):**

Information on how to access SAT- what services are offered, and the types of equipment available.

April 30th - (Dorval Site) **MAB/Mackay Service for Assistive Technologies (SAT):**



Evening Info Sessions - FREE with membership May 7th, 6 pm - 8 pm

May 7th - (NDG Site) **Hearing Aids - Care & Maintenance:**

Information on the different types of hearing aids available and proper care and maintenance of hearing aid devices.



SPEECHREADING (Lip-reading)

Without realizing it, most individuals with hearing loss speechread to a certain extent. Most people may not know it is a skill that can be learned. We offer Beginners Speechreading and Speechreading Plus classes in N.D.G. and on the West Island. All CHIP speechreading instructors have followed the training offered by the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA).

NDG site:

7000 Sherbrooke St. West.

FEE: \$15 with CHIP membership

Speechreading PLUS (Room B315A)

Every Tuesday, 10 am - 12 pm (10 classes)
March 20 to May 22

Speechreading Beginners (Room B315A)

Every Tuesday, 1 pm - 3 pm (10 classes)
March 20 to May 22

Speechreading PLUS (Room C37B)

Every Thursday, 1 pm - 3 pm (10 classes)
March 22 to May 24

Speechreading Evening (Room C234)

Every Wednesday, 6 pm - 8 pm (10 classes)
April 4 to June 13 except May 30

West Island Satellite Sites

FEE: \$25 with CHIP membership

KIRKLAND site - Speechreading Beginners Chartwell Manoir Kirkland (conference room)

2 Canvin St, Kirkland, QC H9H 4B5

Every Wednesday, 1 pm - 3 pm (10 classes)
March 21 to May 23

DORVAL site - Speechreading PLUS Sarto Desnoyers Community Centre (Room 202)

1335 Lakeshore Dr, Dorval, QC H9S 2E5

Every Wednesday, 1 pm - 3 pm (10 classes)
March 21 to May 23



March

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
REGISTRATION STARTS on March 1st, 2018			World Hearing Day on March 3rd, 2018	
19	Speechreading Plus NDG site 10am to 12pm 1st Class Speechreading Beginners NDG site 1pm to 3pm 1st Class	Speechreading Beginners Kirkland site 1pm to 3pm 1st Class Speechreading Plus Dorval site 1pm to 3pm 1st Class	Speechreading Plus NDG site 1pm to 3pm 1st Class	23
Computer Classes Basics NDG site 1pm to 3pm 1st Class	Speechreading Plus NDG site 10am to 12pm 2nd Class Speechreading Beginners NDG site 1pm to 3pm 2nd Class	Speechreading Beginners Kirkland site 1pm to 3pm 2nd Class Speechreading Plus Dorval site 1pm to 3pm 2nd Class	Speechreading Plus NDG site 1pm to 3pm 2nd Class	30 CHIP Closed

April

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
2 CHIP Closed	Speechreading Plus NDG site 10am - 12pm 3rd Class Speechreading Beginners NDG site 1pm to 3pm 3rd Class	Speechreading Beginners Kirkland site 1pm to 3pm 3rd Class Speechreading Plus Dorval site 1pm to 3pm 3rd Class Speechreading NDG site 6pm to 8pm 1st Class	Speechreading Plus NDG site 1pm to 3pm 3rd Class	6
Computer Classes Basics NDG site 1pm to 3pm 2nd Class Daytime Info Sessions NDG Site 10am to 12pm Hearing Aids	Speechreading Plus NDG site 10am to 12pm 4th Class Speechreading Beginners NDG site 1pm to 3pm 4th Class	Speechreading Beginners Kirkland site 1pm to 3pm 4th Class Speechreading Plus Dorval site 1pm to 3pm 4th Class Speechreading NDG site 6pm to 8pm 2nd Class	Speechreading Plus NDG site 1pm to 3pm 4th Class Daytime Info Sessions NDG Site 10am-12pm Tinnitus	13
Computer Classes Basics NDG site 1pm to 3pm 3rd Class Volunteer Appreciation Week	Speechreading Plus NDG site 10am to 12pm 5th Class Speechreading Beginners NDG site 1pm to 3pm 5th Class	Speechreading Beginners Kirkland site 1pm to 3pm 5th Class Speechreading Plus Dorval site 1pm to 3pm 5th Class Speechreading NDG site 6pm to 8pm 3rd Class	Speechreading Plus NDG site 1pm to 3pm 5th Class	20
Computer Classes Basics NDG site 1pm to 3pm 4th Class Daytime Info Sessions NDG Site 10am to 12pm MAB/Mackay - SAT	Speechreading Plus NDG site 10am to 12pm 6th Class Speechreading Beginners NDG site 1pm to 3pm 6th Class	Speechreading Beginners Kirkland site 1pm to 3pm 6th Class Speechreading Plus Dorval site 1pm to 3pm 6th Class Speechreading NDG site 6pm to 8pm 4th Class	Speechreading Plus NDG site 1pm to 3pm 6th Class	27

Pull out Calendar

May

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Computer Classes Basics NDG site 1pm to 3pm 5th Class Daytime Info Sessions Dorval Site 10am to 12pm MAB/Mackay - SAT 30	Speechreading Plus NDG site 10am - 12pm 7th Class Speechreading Beginners NDG site 1pm to 3pm 7th Class 1	Speechreading Beginners Kirkland site 1pm to 3pm 7th Class Speechreading Plus NDG site 6pm to 8pm 5th Class Speechreading Plus Dorval site 1pm to 3pm 7th Class 2	Speechreading Plus NDG site 1pm to 3pm 7th Class 3	4
Computer Classes Basics NDG site 1pm to 3pm 6th Class Evening Info Sessions NDG Site 6pm to 8pm Hearing Aids 7	Speechreading Plus NDG site 10am - 12pm 8th Class Speechreading Beginners NDG site 1pm to 3pm 8th Class 8	Speechreading Beginners Kirkland site 1pm to 3pm 8th Class Speechreading Plus NDG site 6pm to 8pm 8th Class Speechreading Plus Dorval site 1pm to 3pm 8th Class 9	Speechreading Plus NDG site 1pm to 3pm 8th Class 10	11
Computer Classes Basics NDG site 1pm to 3pm 7th Class 14	Speechreading Plus NDG site 10am to 12pm 9th Class Speechreading Beginners NDG site 1pm to 3pm 9th Class 15	Speechreading Beginners Kirkland site 1pm to 3pm 9th Class Speechreading Plus NDG site 6pm to 8pm 7th Class Speechreading Plus Dorval site 1pm to 3pm 9th Class 16	Speechreading Plus NDG site 1pm to 3pm 9th Class 17	18
CHIP Closed 21	Speechreading Plus NDG site 10am to 12pm 10th Class Speechreading Beginners NDG site 1pm to 3pm 10th Class 22	Speechreading Beginners Kirkland site 1pm to 3pm 10th Class Speechreading Plus NDG site 6pm to 8pm 8th Class Speechreading Plus Dorval site 1pm to 3pm 10th Class 23	Speechreading Plus NDG site 1pm to 3pm 10th Class 24	25
Computer Classes Basics NDG site 1pm to 3pm 8th Class 28	29	Annual General Meeting 30	31	1

Pull out Calendar

June

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
4	5	6 Speechreading NDG site 6pm to 8pm 9th Class	7	8
11	12	13 Speechreading NDG site 6pm to 8pm 10th Class	14	15

Perspectives

In Search of the Elusive Quiet Restaurant

“It is important to sensitize the general public to the needs of the hearing impaired. Just as there would be a need for a ramp for those with mobility problems, there should be accommodation for those who are hard of hearing.”

CHIP wants to create a list of quiet Montreal restaurants in response to our hard-of-hearing members who are having difficulty in locating a more tranquil place to dine. Finding a quiet eating spot for people who are hard of hearing (and even those who aren't) can be a frustrating experience. Most restaurants are arranged to maximize revenues by placing tables close together and the decor usually has hard surfaces (e.g. glass or tile), which intensifies the noise. And then, to add insult to injury, music is played in the background.

What is someone who wants a quiet night out to do?

My experience has been that, once I discover a quiet restaurant, it generally closes within a few months. The New York Times food critic describes noise levels in her weekly column, along with price, location and accessibility. The ratings are always “very noisy”. It makes you wonder why she bothers.

But does it have to be this way?

Acoustical panels can be added to make restaurants quieter, and music can be turned down. We should remember that noise is subjective. Never rely on how the restaurant owner might describe the restaurant. There are such other factors as:

- dining during peak hours
- being seated beside the noisy kitchen area
- a large group celebrating a birthday placed next to yours.

There are certain givens, such as the fact that trendy restaurants aimed at younger patrons will have louder music - owners or managers will probably be less open to turning it down. Older patrons tend to want quieter spots and restaurateurs will be more open to turning down the music when mainly catering to a more mature population. And beware the restaurant that blares the music to please the kitchen staff. It is usually the kind of music their own patrons would never want to listen to.

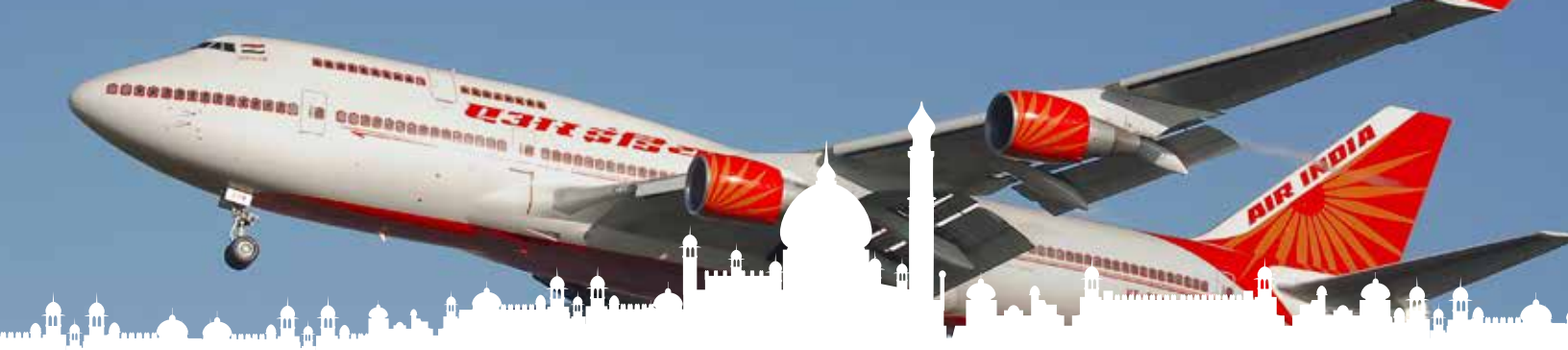
It is important to sensitize the general public to the needs of the hearing impaired. Just as there would be a need for a ramp for those with mobility problems, there should be accommodation for those who are hard of hearing.

David Suzuki in his programme “The Nature of Things” on the Science of Sound makes the point that your brain is prevented from processing taste when you are distracted by noise. As we all know, for example, planes are very noisy and the food always tastes bland.

Please send the name of your favourite quiet restaurant with the location and type of food to df@hearhear.org and we will compile a list and place it on our social media pages and on our website.



Debra Fisher is a speech reading instructor at CHIP and an avid traveler who would like to see a registry of quiet restaurants in all major cities.



Perspective

Silence is not Golden!



By John Gupta is a speech reading student at CHIP and often helps with our fundraising efforts.

“It taught me a valuable lesson: service givers are not mind readers. I also learned at CHIP classes to let them know up front that I am hearing impaired.”

Silence is not golden. In fact, for a person with hearing loss, it can have serious consequences.

In my case, it started with a missed flight. In February 2015, I visited my native country, India. Whenever I go, I make it a point to visit my surviving siblings. My younger sister lives in the remote city of Guwahati, which is a one hour flight from Kolkata (formerly known as Calcutta). On a mild traffic day in Kolkata, it takes a good hour to get to the airport. Not to take any chances I decided to start two hours early.

I was on time and checked in with plenty of time to spare. The Kolkata Airport is constantly cacophonous, with noisy announcements that are made every minute, without any visual signs. The announcements are made in both Hindi and English.

I decided to go to the gate printed on my boarding pass. My flight was due to leave at 10 a.m., which would give me time to have lunch with my sister and her family on arrival. I found the newly-built airport had some very comfy chairs. I grabbed one and started to read a book. I mentally switched off the noise by reading a biography of an Indian Monk, Swami Vivekananda.

When I lifted my eyes from the book and looked at my watch, it was 9.45 a.m. Panic time! I went up to the clerk and he looked at me in utter amazement. He said “The doors have already been closed. Did you not hear the gate change we announced so many times?” I didn’t tell him that I am hearing impaired.

I asked him what my options were now. He suggested buying a new ticket for much later in the day or going back to the booking office and talking to the supervisor. His last suggestion seemed to be more appealing to me. I decided I would plead my case of hearing impairment. I walked back to the front gate with the young clerk as my guide. The supervisor, a young lady, heard my story and immediately asked another clerk to issue a new ticket for the next flight.

I thanked her profusely. She said “Please don’t thank me. I could be the age of your daughter.” That part was her Indian humility. “If I had a daughter like you - so kind, compassionate and understanding - I would be a very proud father,” I said.

Although this episode turned out OK, it taught me a valuable lesson: service givers are not mind readers. I also learned at CHIP classes to let them know up front that I am hearing impaired.

And when we are hearing impaired, silence is not golden.





“

TCHH is a non-profit humanitarian aid organization that aims, through self-determination, independence and dignity, to develop rehabilitation services in communities.

”

BTW

by Marilyn Rancourt Emond, acoustician

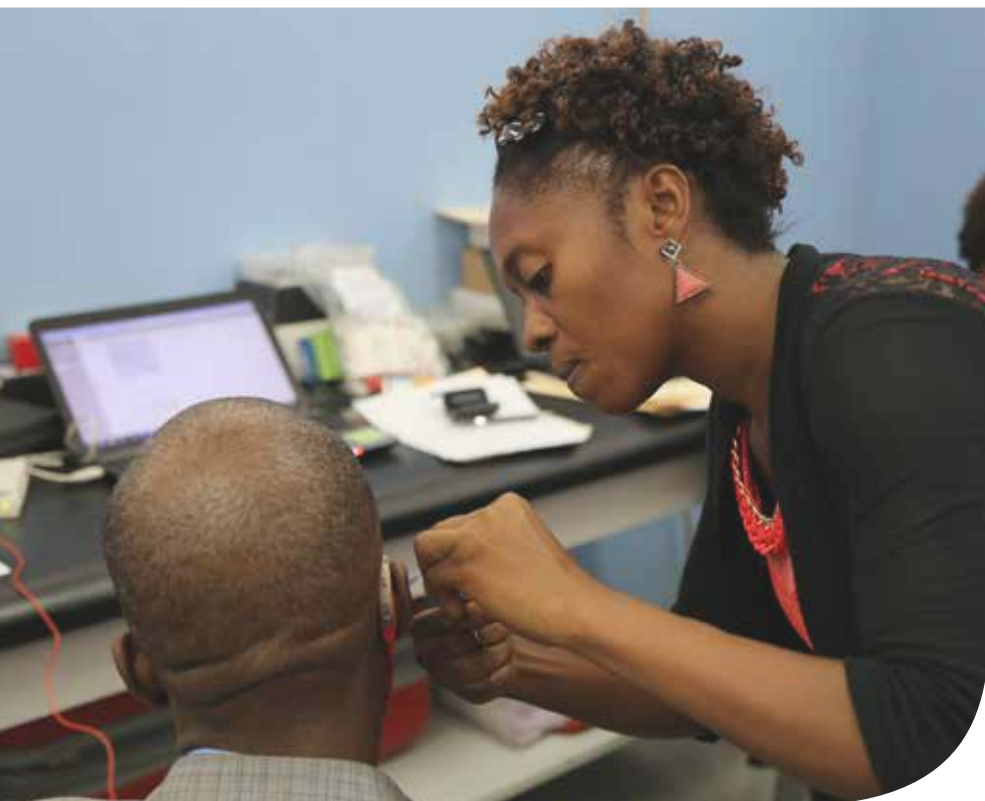
HAITI: WHY I KEEP GOING BACK

I first got involved with Team Canada Healing Hands (TCHH) in 2011 while studying audioprosthesis. Since 2012, I have continued that involvement as a professional audioprosthetist (acoustician). TCHH is a non-profit humanitarian aid organization that aims, through self-determination, independence and dignity, to develop rehabilitation services in communities. Citizen involvement is at the heart of the project.

The TCHH Hearing and Communication special project was established in 2005 by speech-language pathologist Huguette LeFrançois. Its mission is to promote the growth of top-notch services in the fields of audiology, audioprosthesis (hearing aid technology) and speech therapy, while addressing the needs identified by our local partners.

I was drawn to this project because I wanted to experience another culture, step out of my comfort zone and use my experience as an audioprosthetist to help make the availability of hearing aids a lasting reality in Haiti. In the field, our team's main goal is to pass on its knowledge so the people of Haiti can evaluate the needs and provide the proper hearing aids on their own, all year long.

My main tasks within the project are putting together the audioprosthesis training materials (books, exercises and evaluations), helping out with the mission preparations and promoting the project on Facebook. Open-mindedness, service to others, compassion and kindness are values that are dear to me - and in the current state of the world, I believe them to be increasingly important in our lives.



To date, five audiometry technicians have passed the practical and theoretical trainings. Two have also completed the audioprosthesis training. They are currently working in three different clinics in Port-au-Prince. A permanent audiology clinic was founded in 2013 at the Centre St-Vincent pour Enfants Handicapés with the help of our team. On their own, the Haitian technicians we have trained are now doing audiometric evaluations and providing hearing aids for adults and children 6 years of age and older, one day a week.

During the missions, our teams of audiologists and audioprosthesis can see numerous patients while giving practical training to the students. Since 2011, more than 400 persons have had their hearing evaluated and been subsequently equipped with the hearing aids they required.

What is most precious to me is the wealth of bonds and friendships created over time - both with the Haitian people and the other professionals who take part in the project. It's the healthy re-evaluation of my values and beliefs every time I come back. It's in how much I learn - both as a person and a professional - about who I am and who I would like to become. It's seeing that sharing between two very different cultures is possible and stimulating. It's in this island I have come to know and love, with its

bigger-than-life mountain and ocean sceneries, with its tasty and generous cuisine, its mystery, art, authors, poetry, music, colors, beauty, light. It's this country and its proud people, with their colorful language, extraordinary smiles, resilience, fierce warmth and lust for life - the magic that is scattered in everything. It's the flame I find every time I look into their eyes.

To learn more, please visit: <https://www.facebook.com/projetspecialauditionetcommunicationtchh/>



**Note: Used behind-the-ear hearing aids can be sent to this address (care of Francis Garnier):
Polyclinique Saint-Eustache, 75 rue Grignon, Saint-Eustache (Québec) J7P 4J2.**

Emphasizing the *paw*sitive! 🐾

My hearing loss crept up on me unnoticed over a few years, until my ENT doctor and an audiologist confirmed that I had a mild to moderate hearing loss. Fortunately, the loss is progressing slowly and I started wearing hearing aids a few years ago, on and off. It took a long time to accept them after finding ones that suited me.

The last three years of participating in the Speechreading classes was a wonderful experience. The instructors (Eva and Jill) provided us with so much information on a variety of topics and I met wonderful people at these courses. During this time, I realized there was more of an impact from my hearing loss than I had thought.

Taking these courses has also given me the confidence to do what has now greatly changed my life. I live alone and have always had dogs and been involved with dog activities. When my last dog died, I decided that I would no longer have one, but it was hard to get used to being alone. I also noticed that I had relied on my dog for companionship and security: some good neighbors had just moved to Ontario, so I felt quite alone and nervous at night.

I decided to apply for a Hearing Ear Dog and discovered there is only one organization that trains them: the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides in Oakville, Ont. In the spring of 2016 I made my application and, after a lengthy waiting period, I was called to attend a training course with a matched dog selected for me. In June of this year, after graduating from a two-week training program, I returned home with my sweet, wonderful female black Labrador Retriever, Frisbee. She is my constant companion, my extra set of ears and my living, breathing ALD!

In the Fall I signed up for the next level of Speechreading. My thanks to Eva for her interest and support from the beginning and to Jill for introducing Frisbee and me to the group. During the introduction session, the following questions were presented:

Why did you apply for a Hearing Ear Dog?

I explained about my anxiety about living alone with a hearing loss and my extensive experience with dogs. I had heard about Hearing Ear Dogs and was also familiar with The Guide Dog program for visually-impaired people. At one time I had been a foster puppy trainer and felt this would be just the right thing for me.

What was involved?

I completed an application form, a medical form, provided a recent audiology report and two references. After about six weeks, I received a notification of acceptance in principle. The next step would be a home assessment visit, which only happened in the fall. Patience was needed.

About a month after my home assessment, I was notified that I had been accepted and would be given about six weeks' notice to go their center in Oakville for two weeks of training and orientation. **I WAS SO HAPPY, I COULD HARDLY BELIEVE IT.** But it turned out to be a very long wait. Even more patience was needed... as well as hope and perseverance.

What is the cost of the training program?

The total cost of a dog guide is about \$25,000.00 per dog. However they are provided free of charge to their new handlers. This fee includes the breeding program, puppy rearing and training during the first year.

Puppies are fostered by volunteer foster parents during this time. At about one year of age, they return to the center for at least six months training in one of six programs (for various disabilities or conditions)

The training of the client with the matched dog, depending on the program, lasts two to six weeks. During this time, the client is given free board and lodging at the center and free transportation from anywhere in Canada to the center and back home with their dog, when and if they graduate.

The costs include a follow-up home visit from the trainer and support on a continuous basis.

“ I returned home with my sweet, wonderful female black Labrador Retriever, FRISBEE. She is my constant companion, my extra set of ears and my living, breathing ALD! ”

What breeds are used?

The breeds used are mostly labrador retrievers, golden retrievers, standard and miniature poodles and golden labrador mixes. They occasionally use another breed from another facility.

What sounds are Hearing Ear Dogs (HED) trained for?

They are trained for seven common household sounds: door knocking and doorbell ringing, alarm clocks, timers, name calling, telephone ringing, a crying baby and smoke alarms. Other sounds might be added, depending on the client's needs.

How does Frisbee notify you?

When she hears the sound, she will notify me by touching me with her paw or nose or even jumping up. When she gets my attention, she will take me to the source of the sound, getting a good reward and praise each time.

In the case of a fire/smoke alarm, she must act differently, by first notifying me with touch but instead of going to the source she will spin in a circle to get my attention. Whenever we practice this, she gets a big reward, a special treat and extra praise, then we leave the location. She then gets a special play toy and play-time.

How is the public expected to act in the presence of a Dog Guide?

This applies to all Guide Dogs/Service/Assistance Dogs. You can recognize them: a dog guide will be wearing the official vest or harness from a nationally-approved training facility and the handler will have an official ID from the training facility. The Hearing Ear Dog Guide (HED) will be wearing an orange vest with the Dog Guides logo and an indicator that he/she is a Hearing Ear Dog. All Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides will have on their vest the logo and name of the specific program they are trained for. When in a public area, they will **always be on a leash** and attentive to their handler. They will never be off-leash in public.

These dogs are entitled to go in to public areas with their handler. **They are not pets** and are trained to be obedient to their handler and ignore people around them while working.

If you meet dog guides, please do not pet them, talk to them or offer food. This might distract them from their work and, if frequent, might stop them from working, especially in the early months of being with their new handler. You may talk to the handler, who will be only too happy to answer any questions, but please do not ask them any personal questions regarding their disability or reason for having their dog guide. However if the Handler needs or asks for help, they will always be appreciative.

What advice do you have for anyone interested in becoming a Dog Team (Dog and Handler)?

I am not in a position to give advice, as I am very new to this. But from my experience so far, I can say that the waiting time is long and there are a number of

stages in the waiting period. You will need patience and more patience.

Be ready for a big-time commitment. This not a short-term project. You must have a genuine love for dogs, even if you are not necessarily experienced. Although experience is an advantage, you will get training at the center. Be aware of the responsibility, time and dedication needed. Involvement and cooperation of the immediate family is essential. Your physical environment must be suitable for a dog - ideally a fenced-in yard or at least a suitable opportunity and space for exercise and play. Be prepared to find plenty of time for training and play time for your dog, lots of praise and love. After all, he/she is still a dog and needs to be one. And be aware of the significant cost of care and feeding, plus veterinary expenses. Once you have your Hearing Ear Dog home, all those expenses are yours.

For me, it has all been worth it. I now have my beautiful, sweet Frisbee. I will never forget the experience and the time spent at Dog Guides in Oakville. The trainers and all staff were so

caring and helpful, it was amazing, and as a dog team now, I know they are always there to help and advise me.

Frisbee makes my days so much brighter. She is company and I feel so good knowing she serves as my extra ears. Having Frisbee also makes it much easier to advocate for myself and to let people know I am hard of hearing. I can point to her and say to my friend or anyone "I am hard of hearing that's why I have my friend Frisbee here at my side. Could you please repeat that?". Or "Speak a little louder please". Restaurants are now easier, too. I show them her vest and don't have to say much more. They take note.

“ I NEVER THOUGHT BEING HARD OF HEARING COULD HAVE SUCH A POSITIVE OUTCOME AS HAVING MY HEARING EAR DOG, FRISBEE. ”

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