

HEAR HEAR MAGAZINE

FALL
2017

- Kimberley Chan's Hearing Journey
- NEW Faces at CHIP
- WORLD HEARING DAY
March 3, 2018

I learned to "listen"
without hearing much





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TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Message	3
Perspectives: My Hearing Journey	4-5
Executive Director's Message	6-7
2017 Annual General Assembly	8-9
Pull-out Calendar	10-11
Programs for Fall 2017	12-13
Coming Full Circle: Speechreading can help	14-15
Noise-Induced Hearing Loss	16-17
Thank you to our donors and partners	18-19

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President's Message

to members and partners



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I have known about CHIP and the excellent work it does for many years. In my former life before retirement, as Director of a school for children with hearing loss (Montreal Oral School for the Deaf), I happily read through the Communicader magazines we regularly received. There seemed a world of difference (mainly age!) between the wonderful work we carried out with children, youth and their families and the many accomplishments of CHIP.

The thing I loved most in that part of my career was meeting newly-diagnosed families, and helping them on their pathway to success, navigating their child's life with hearing loss. Little did I realize that it would become something I would also enjoy in my retirement, when I started teaching speechreading to adults who were faced with the new reality of living with a hearing loss. Even more interesting was my own journey, living with hearing loss that continued to gradually decline over the past 25 years.

It is hard not to get involved with CHIP. There are wonderful members who bring such diversity to the classes and workshops, there are devoted and creative staff members who take their work very seriously and there is a Board of Directors that is passionate about meeting the current and future needs of CHIP. The work of many

volunteers carries CHIP forward, yet it is somewhat frightening how vulnerable CHIP could be to the unforeseen or the unknown.

CHIP's major focus for the coming year will be to solidify and diversify its funding base, while maintaining the services members have come to expect and appreciate. We need to know that such programs as Outreach, which reaches out to those in need and often results in new membership, and the Speechreading classes can continue to make such a difference in the lives of those with hearing loss. Funding for these and other programs, such as the ALD program, the Interactive programs and workshops, and others we would like to adapt or establish, is crucial for continuity and creativity in meeting future needs.

CHIP is reaching out to all members, asking for help in building a solid financial foundation. We need members to contribute financially to whatever extent they can, but even more importantly, we need members to be CHIP's ambassadors. We ask that you spread the word about your experiences with CHIP. Whether it be to a family member, friend, coworker or an acquaintance,

your own experiences with hearing loss can be powerful messages to those just starting their own journey. We ask that you think about whether there are individuals in your family circle, friends and acquaintances who could possibly help CHIP with its strategic plan. I invite each of you to call, email or write with any ideas you may have or suggestions for "Persons of Interest" who could make a difference for CHIP.

Thank you for your support and your consideration.



Martha Perusse
marthaperusse@hearhear.org



Perspectives:

By *Kimberley Chan*
My Hearing Journey

It's been wonderful meeting many CHIP members over the past few months, particularly at the AGM this past May. It was an honor to be invited to talk about my challenging hearing journey. If you attended, I hope you enjoyed it! It's amazing how your life can change in just a few minutes.

A recap of my journey...

In June 2015, I was out celebrating my birthday, when I suddenly couldn't hear very well. At that time, I wore a hearing aid in my right ear, and thought it was broken. I left to run home to get my spare hearing aid. By the time I got home, I felt sick and couldn't even hear that well with my other hearing aid. I blamed it on food poisoning and went to bed.

The next day, I couldn't hear ANYTHING. I was diagnosed with an ear infection, but two

weeks later, the infection had cleared, and I still couldn't really hear. After an audiology exam, I was diagnosed with Sudden Sensorineural Hearing Loss (SSHL), aka sudden deafness. When this happens, your hearing drops more than 30 dB in a short amount of time.

As a child, I had lost all my hearing in my left ear and about half my hearing in my right ear, but I never really felt like I had a big hearing loss. The hearing aid allowed me to rely on my hearing and get through everything – elementary and high school, my university studies in journalism and communications, travels, working abroad, pursuing dance and theatre, and many other things.

With almost all the hearing in my better ear gone, I felt like I had a hearing loss for the first time. SSHL can sometimes be reversed with prednisone

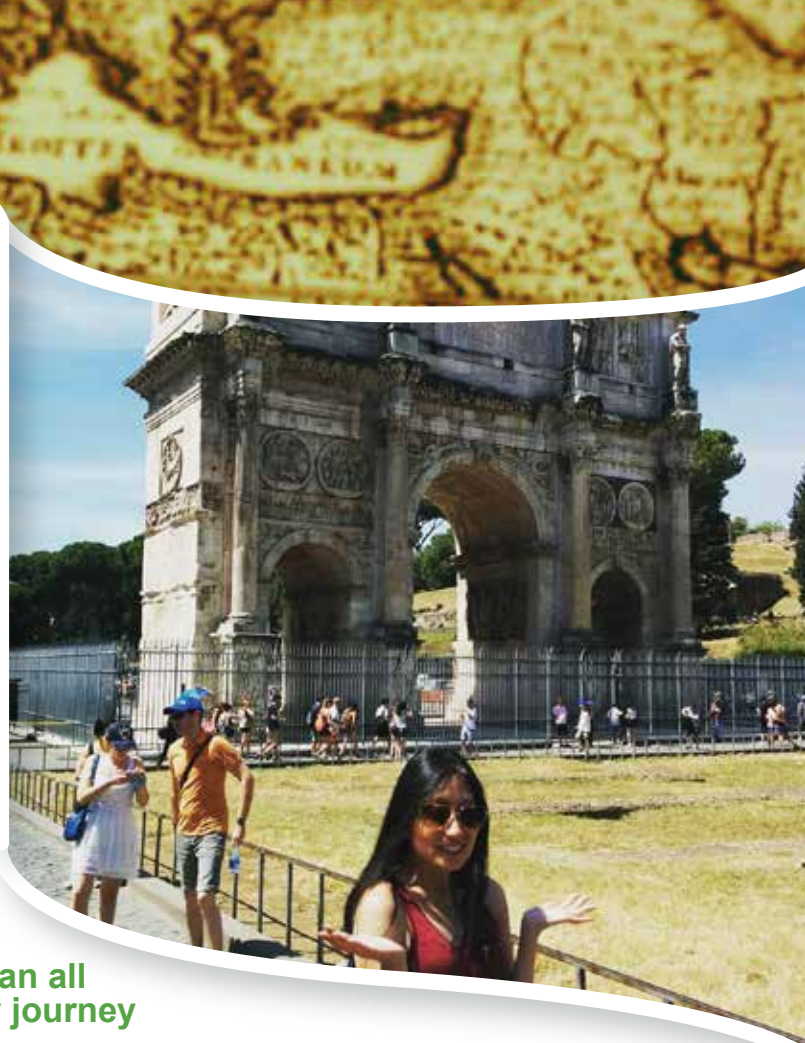
injections and surgery; but one emergency surgery and two injections later, my hearing still hadn't improved. Some of it returned, but speech wasn't clear and everything sounded off.

Getting my hearing back

Hearing aids were now useless. The only solution was to get a cochlear implant; but I couldn't just get one. I had to apply and wait, and do many different kinds of tests to see if I was eligible for one. I traveled from Montreal to Quebec City twice for evaluations, because the only hospital in the province authorized to perform the CI surgery is there. I finally had my surgery 8 months after I lost my hearing.

Learning to cope

During those 8 months, the only thing I could do was wait. I could no longer live on my own, go out with friends, or even go to work. I had to learn to communicate and



understand what was going on around me without using my ears. This was frustrating! It made me realize how much I relied on my hearing and how I took it for granted.

I learned to “listen” without hearing much. I could hear sounds, but couldn’t understand speech. I would try to listen to people’s tones when they spoke, and watch their facial expressions and body language. I couldn’t make out words, but I’d sometimes be able to make out the dynamics and tell how many syllables a word had, and which vowel sounds were being used. It was a tough period, but I gained a new skill - now, I can sometimes understand people better than my hearing friends in loud environments—or even if someone has a very heavy accent!

Lessons we can all learn from my journey

As I mentioned during my presentation, having something like this happen completely changes your outlook on life. I learned a few important things:

Appreciate what you have

Do not take anything for granted, because it can disappear in minutes! I never, ever thought I could lose my hearing in a couple of minutes - this can happen to anyone (though mercifully it is rare)!

Perseverance is everything

Some hearing professionals told me that I would never hear as loudly and clearly as before. But I knew this was possible. I had to fight for my hearing the way a martial artist fights to get his black belt.

Do it now

Do the things you want to do NOW. Learn that skill you’ve always wanted to learn, spend time with your friends and family who live miles away, take that trip you’ve always wanted to take - do whatever makes you happy.



I’ve been writing about my journey in detail

- visit www.kimberleychan.ca to read more.

A Word from the Executive Director



As the only registered not-for-profit organization serving adults affected by hearing loss who speak English in Quebec, our work is never-ending. There will always be work for us, someone to reach out to and support. We have a powerful opportunity -- and a huge responsibility-- to help transform people's lives.

This October will be the start of my fifth year with CHIP. We have come so far and learned so much. I am proud to be a part of this amazing organization with such devoted members, staff and volunteers. I would like to sincerely thank everyone who has had a part in growing with us. I look forward to continuing to cultivate our mission.

In June 2017, we had our 3rd annual CHIP retreat, where board, staff and volunteers came together to discuss CHIP's future. This process was a powerful one - we reviewed our **strengths, areas of concern, future directions and opportunities.**

We would like to welcome Nadine Soliman as our new part-time administrative support, working on membership and registration, managing the contact management system, as well as updating and supporting the website and social media sites. As many of you know, Nadine has been volunteering with CHIP for over a year and is very passionate about our mission.



We would also like to welcome Tracy Burton, who has spent the summer volunteering with us. Tracy has experience working with seniors in Australia. She will be CHIP's new Program Manager. Her mandate will be to manage CHIP's programs and services as well as support our many volunteers.



A Fond Farewell to Danya

This June we said goodbye to Danya Morris. We would like to thank her for all her hard work and dedication to CHIP and we wish her all the best in her new endeavours in Ottawa with her family. She will be greatly missed.



Future Directions

At the AGM on May 31st, we described the CHIP team as “small but mighty”. Finding the balance between what we would like to do and what we can do is always a challenge. Normally, in the fall, we offer a conference to our members and partners. This year, however, we will work instead on a special event to be held in March as part of World Hearing Day.

In addition, there are several avenues that CHIP would like to pursue, including:

- Greater accessibility to our members
- Prevention of noise-induced hearing loss in vulnerable populations (see page 16-17)
- More sustainable social programs
- Technology as a tool for breaking isolation

These are important programs and services we feel need to be offered, however they require funding in order to make them feasible. With increased funding, we would be able to provide even more programs and services to our members. Fundraising will be a focus over the coming months. We are calling on you to help us with these efforts (see page 18, and attached letter.)

Strengths

Over the past couple of years, we have developed our recipe for success. Essentially, these are what we see as our strengths:

- 1) Continuing to build our membership and partnerships with the community.
- 2) Highlighting our strengths and progress by showcasing our personal hearing journeys.
- 3) Supporting and growing together through peer mentoring and peer-support programs.

Program Highlights

Our programs and services are the heart of CHIP. We are always evaluating the best way to serve our members. Here are some highlights and future directions for the coming year.

In Spring 2017, we introduced a new **evening speechreading** course at the Montreal site. This program was offered so that speechreading would be available for members who are working or studying and not available during the daytime. The class was well-attended and the participants had very positive feedback about the course.

We also restructured our Speechreading Program to better serve our members. Instead of continuing to offer three levels (beginners, intermediate and advanced), where members would “graduate” from one class to another, offered on different days, we now offer a Beginner Speechreading class, followed by Speechreading Plus. New members will focus on learning the basic skills of speechreading, while returning members will have the option of choosing whichever of the four Speechreading Plus classes

suits their schedules and preferences. The instructors will rotate so participants can have the opportunity to experience a variety of instructors. The four Speechreading Plus programs (two classes in Montreal and two at West Island sites) will be geared toward reinforcing the skills of speechreading already learned, providing our members with a favourable setting in which to practice those skills, promoting the development of coping and self-management skills, and most of all providing members with a safe space to grow, support and encourage each other.

2017 Annual General Meeting

This year's Annual General Meeting was very successful. We had many of our members and partners in attendance, along with special guests **William Steinberg**, Mayor of Hampstead, and **Margaret Guest**, assistant to Marc Garneau, MP, NDG-Westmount Riding. The evening was about more than just reviewing our last year and what we accomplished; we also focused on what we still want to do and our future directions. We updated our bylaws and presented our audited financial report. More importantly we presented awards and acknowledged some very special people.

NEW this year "GOLDEN EAR AWARD"

The Hearing Health Professional (HHP) Golden Ear Award is given in recognition of an HHP who has offered outstanding support to people affected by hearing loss. In addition, it is offered in recognition of that person's ongoing support and encouragement of CHIP's mission.



The Sound Choice for the 2017 Golden Ear Award was Marsha Gardner

Marsha is an audiologist at the McGill University Health Centre and has been working in the field for over 40 years. Despite working at very busy hospital Audiology departments, first at the Montreal General Hospital and now at MUHC Glen site, Marsha takes time to listen to and counsel her clients. She has a reputation for going to bat for clients if she feels they are not obtaining the services they need. In her advice to patients, she is always honest and straightforward, sometimes throwing in a bit of tough love. She is devoted to her work. It is not just a job to her, and she has made it her mission to give excellent service to persons with hearing loss. Marsha has supported CHIP's mission and approach for many years, being a member of CHIP, donating to CHIP and telling many of her clients about our programs and services.



Doreen Cons Spirit of CHIP Award

This award is presented annually to an individual who has been a devoted volunteer working to promote CHIP's mission to improve the lives of people affected by hearing loss. The 2017 recipient of the Doreen Cons Spirit of CHIP Award was **Nina Chen**.

Nina Chen has been a dedicated volunteer with CHIP for over five years. She serves on the Board of Directors, has been a core part of the Lily Bernstein Resource Centre handling various library tasks, and has helped with our Interactive Program including the Book Club and Movie Club. Nina is a welcoming and listening person who helps people feel at ease and understood. On the board and in other situations, Nina helps remind us to use good communication strategies. Her contributions to CHIP are very much appreciated.

Lifetime Membership

In recognition of their outstanding contribution to CHIP and its mission. Awarded to:

Richard Lubelsky
Dave and Pamela Tait
Bob Johnstone
Lou Brock
Doreen and Barney Cons
Reginald Weiswall
Jack Scheiss
José-Renée Trudeau
Alvin Goldman
Dorothy Pocock



Emeritus Status

In recognition of their specific outstanding devotion and dedication to the Board of Directors:

Lou Brock
Doreen Cons
Alvin Goldman



Winner of the Sennheiser LOOP fundraiser

At the Annual General Meeting, several months of fundraising towards Looping the Lily Bernstein Room came to a close. Diana Wood was the winner of the Sennheiser Headphones which can be used by those who use hearing aids or a cochlear implant, or those who do not have a hearing loss at all. The funds raised, over \$500, will support the purchase of a portable loop system that will benefit our members in classes, meetings and workshops. Thank you to all who contributed toward this worthy goal!



September

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
REGISTRATION STARTS on Sept 1st, 2017				15 CHHA Beginners Chartwell Manoir Kirkland site 1pm to 3pm 1st Class
18 CHHA Beginners NDG site 10am to 12pm 1st Class	19 Speechreading Plus NDG site 1pm to 3pm 1st Class	20 Speechreading Plus Dorval site 1pm to 3pm 1st Class	21 NO CLASSES!	22 Speechreading Plus Bayview site 10am to 12pm 1st Class
25 CHHA Beginners 10am to 12pm 2nd Class	26 Speechreading Plus NDG site 1pm to 3pm 2nd Class	27 Speechreading Plus Dorval site 1pm to 3pm 2nd Class	28 Speechreading Plus NDG site 10am to 12pm 1st Class Movie Club La La Land NDG Site 1pm to 3pm	29 Speechreading Plus Bayview site 10am to 12pm 2nd Class CHHA Beginners Chartwell Manoir Kirkland site 1pm to 3pm 2nd Class

October

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
2 CHHA Beginners NDG site 10am - 12pm 3rd Class	3 Speechreading Plus NDG site 1pm to 3pm 3rd Class	4 Speechreading Plus Dorval site 1pm to 3pm 3rd Class BOOK CLUB NDG Site 1pm to 3pm	5 Speechreading Plus NDG site 10am to 12pm 2nd Class	6 Speechreading Plus Bayview site 10am to 12pm 3rd Class CHHA Beginners Chartwell Manoir Kirkland site 1pm to 3pm 3rd Class
9 Happy Thanksgiving Day CHIP CLOSED	10 CHHA Beginners 10am to 12pm 4th Class Speechreading Plus NDG site 1pm to 3pm 4th Class	11 Speechreading Plus Dorval site 1pm to 3pm 4th Class CHHA Beginners Evening NDG Site 6pm to 8pm 2nd Class	12 Speechreading Plus NDG site 10am to 12pm 3rd Class Movie Club The Lady in the Van NDG Site 1pm to 3pm	13 Speechreading Plus Bayview site 10am to 12pm 4th Class CHHA Beginners Chartwell Manoir Kirkland site 1pm to 3pm 4th Class
16 CHHA Beginners 10am to 12pm 5th Class	17 Speechreading Plus NDG site 1pm to 3pm 5th Class	18 Speechreading Plus Dorval site 1pm to 3pm 5th Class BOOK CLUB NDG Site 1pm to 3pm	19 Speechreading Plus NDG site 10am to 12pm 4th Class	20 Speechreading Plus Bayview site 10am to 12pm 5th Class CHHA Beginners Chartwell Manoir Kirkland site 1pm to 3pm 5th Class
23 CHHA Beginners 10am to 12pm 6th Class	24 Speechreading Plus NDG site 1pm to 3pm 6th Class	25 Speechreading Plus Dorval site 1pm to 3pm 6th Class CHHA Beginners Evening NDG Site 6pm to 8pm 4th Class	26 Speechreading Plus NDG site 10am to 12pm 5th Class	27 Speechreading Plus Bayview site 10am to 12pm 6th Class CHHA Beginners Chartwell Manoir Kirkland site 1pm to 3pm 6th Class
30 CHHA Beginners 10am to 12pm 7th Class	31 Speechreading Plus NDG site 1pm to 3pm 7th Class			

Pull out Calendar

November

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
		Speechreading Plus Dorval site 1pm to 3pm <i>7th Class</i> BOOK CLUB NDG Site 1pm to 3pm CHHA Beginners Evening NDG Site 6pm to 8pm <i>5th Class</i>	Speechreading Plus NDG site 10am to 12pm <i>6th Class</i>	Speechreading Plus Bayview site 10am to 12pm <i>7th Class</i> CHHA Beginners Chartwell Manoir Kirkland site 1pm to 3pm <i>7th Class</i>
6	CHHA Beginners NDG site 10am - 12pm <i>8th Class</i> Speechreading Plus NDG site 1pm to 3pm <i>8th Class</i>	Speechreading Plus Dorval site 1pm to 3pm <i>8th Class</i> CHHA Beginners Evening NDG Site 6pm to 8pm <i>6th Class</i>	Speechreading Plus NDG site 10am to 12pm <i>7th Class</i> Movie Club The Curious Case of Benjamin Button NDG Site 1pm to 3pm	Speechreading Plus Bayview site 10am to 12pm <i>8th Class</i> CHHA Beginners Chartwell Manoir Kirkland site 1pm to 3pm <i>8th Class</i>
13	CHHA Beginners 10am to 12pm <i>9th Class</i> Speechreading Plus NDG site 1pm to 3pm <i>9th Class</i>	Speechreading Plus Dorval site 1pm to 3pm <i>9th Class</i> BOOK CLUB NDG Site 1pm to 3pm CHHA Beginners Evening NDG Site 6pm to 8pm <i>7th Class</i>	Speechreading Plus NDG site 10am to 12pm <i>8th Class</i>	Speechreading Plus Bayview site 10am to 12pm <i>9th Class</i> CHHA Beginners Chartwell Manoir Kirkland site 1pm to 3pm <i>9th Class</i>
20	CHHA Beginners 10am to 12pm <i>10th Class</i> Speechreading Plus NDG site 1pm to 3pm <i>10th Class</i>	Speechreading Plus Dorval site 1pm to 3pm <i>10th Class</i> CHHA Beginners Evening NDG Site 6pm to 8pm <i>8th Class</i>	Speechreading Plus NDG site 10am to 12pm <i>9th Class</i>	Speechreading Plus Bayview site 10am to 12pm <i>10th Class</i> CHHA Beginners Chartwell Manoir Kirkland site 1pm to 3pm <i>10th Class</i>
29	28	29 CHHA Beginners Evening NDG Site 6pm to 8pm <i>9th Class</i> BOOK CLUB NDG Site 1pm to 3pm	30 Speechreading Plus NDG site 10am to 12pm <i>10th Class</i> Movie Club Chocolat NDG Site 1pm to 3pm	1

Pull out Calendar

December

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
4	5	6 CHHA Beginners Evening NDG Site 6pm to 8pm <i>10th Class</i>	7	8 CHIP's Annual POTLUCK Room C234

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
 INFORMATIVE

IDEAL FOR HOUSES OF WORSHIP, COMMUNITY CENTRES & RESIDENCES

FALL PROGRAMS 2017

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

TO REGISTER FOR CLASSES/WORKSHOPS: Please complete the registration form and return it by mail, fax, e-mail to info@hearhear.org, or in person at the CHIP office. Registration forms are available at our office, 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.

CHIP ALD Program - FREE with membership

The ALD Program is offered by appointment only. We are happy to answer your questions about your assistive listening device needs and wants.

Please note we do not repair or sell equipment.

Meet one-on-one with one of CHIP's Peer Mentors.

Please call today for an appointment! 514-488-5552 ext. 4500 or you can email info@hearhear.org to make an appointment.



SPEECHREADING (Lip-reading)

Without realizing it, many individuals with hearing loss already speechread to a certain extent. However, most people may not know that it is a skill that can be improved upon and perfected. We offer the CHHA Beginners Speechreading as well as Speechreading Plus classes in N.D.G. and on the West Island.

NDG site:

7000 Sherbrooke St. West.

FEE: \$20 with CHIP membership

CHHA

Beginner Speechreading Evening (Room C234)

Every Wednesday, 6 pm - 8 pm (10 classes)

October 4 to Dec 6

CHHA Beginner Speechreading (Room C37B)

Every Tuesday, 10 am - 12 pm (10 classes)

Sept 19 to Nov 21

Speechreading Plus (Room C37B) - (choose one)

Every Tuesday, 1 pm - 3 pm (10 classes)

Sept 19 to Nov 21

OR

Every Thursday, 10 am - 12 pm (10 classes)

Sept 28 to Nov 30

West Island Satellite Sites

FEE: \$25 with CHIP membership

KIRKLAND site - CHHA Beginner Speechreading Chartwell Manoir Kirkland (conference room)

2 Canvin St, Kirkland, QC H9H 4B5

Every Friday, 1 pm - 3 pm (10 classes)

Sept 15 to Nov 24 (except Sept 22)

BAYVIEW site - Speechreading Plus Centre Bayview (6th floor conference room)

27 Lakeshore Dr, Pointe-Claire, QC H9S 4H1

Every Friday, 10 am - 12 noon (10 classes)

Sept 22 to Nov 24

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)

Sept 20 to Nov 22

THE LILY BERNSTEIN RESOURCE CENTRE

Access to the library is **FREE** with membership, no appointments needed.

Opening Hours:
Wednesdays and Thursdays 10 am - 3 pm

MOVIE CLUB

**Featured films for Fall, 2017, with English Subtitles:
FREE with Membership**

NDG site: 7000 Sherbrooke St. West, Room B-134



September 28, 2017
La La Land (2016)
2 hours 8 minutes
(Comedy, Drama, Music)



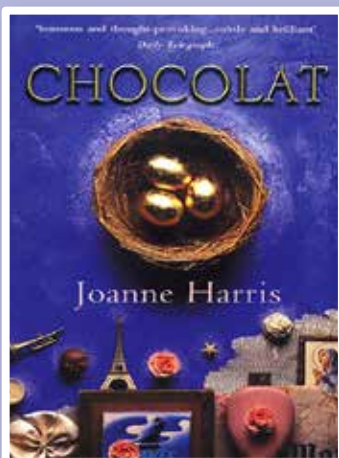
October 12, 2017
The Lady in the Van (2015)
1 hour 44 minutes
(Biography, Comedy, Drama)



November 9, 2017
The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (2008)
2 hours 46 minutes
(Drama, Fantasy, Romance)



November 30, 2017
Chocolat (2000)
2 hours 1 minute
(Drama, Romance)
NEW Book Club Tie-in
(see below)



BOOK CLUB FREE with Membership

New this Session: Come and enjoy the movie version of our Fall Book Club selection!

Book: CHOCOLAT

Author: Joanne Harris

NDG site: 7000 Sherbrooke St. West, Room B-134

Wednesday 1 pm - 3 pm, Bi-weekly:

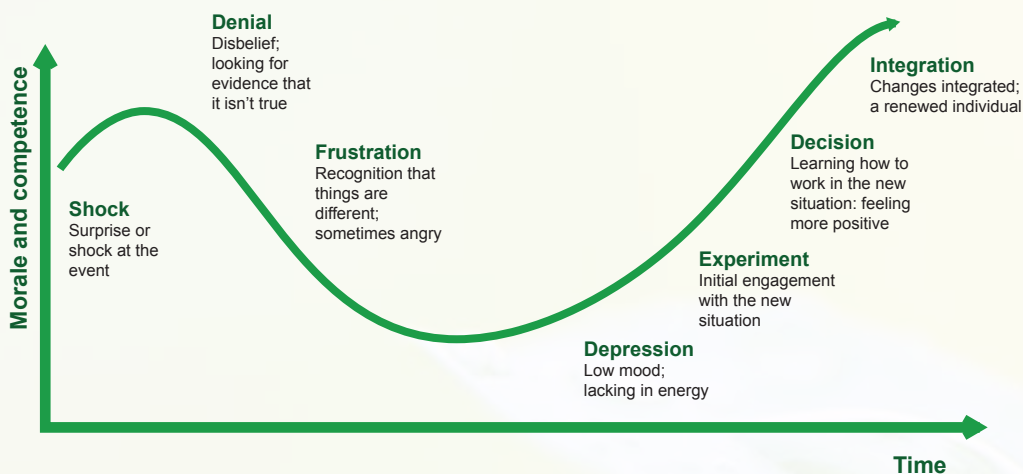
Oct 4, Oct 18, Nov 1, Nov 15, Nov 29

A woman and her daughter open a chocolate shop in a small French village that shakes up the rigid morality of the community.

Coming Full Circle:

As we know, adapting to hearing loss is a process. In fact we often call it a hearing (loss) journey. It takes time and can be quite difficult for some. In many ways, this journey can be compared to the stages of grief/ acceptance first developed by Elizabeth Kübler-Ross in 1969. In the CHIP speechreading classes we see much evidence of these stages, as the program encourages, supports and inspires members along their journey.

The Kübler-Ross change curve



Members often talk about the **shock and denial** they felt when they first suspected hearing loss and even more so, when it was actually diagnosed. **Statistics indicate that it takes, on average, 10 years for individuals to address their hearing issues!** They may get hearing aids and put them in a drawer to maybe try later on. They may cringe at the thought of actually wearing them. It's a new reality and seems so unfair and unwanted.

Anger and frustration are often expressed in the classes as well. Anger at family members who seemingly will not make the extra effort to speak more clearly. Frustration with friends who seem unwilling to make things easier for them. Sometimes it is frustration at even having to make those requests. Frustration with the sound of speech through a hearing aid. Why aren't hearing aids like glasses -- just put them on and hear fine?



Speechreading can help!



A period of **partial acceptance** may follow this time with some exploration of possible solutions. It's at this stage that people may think to join a group, such as the speechreading classes at CHIP. Members often talk about coming to the classes somewhat reluctantly but, at the same time, rather hopefully. The first few classes can be a time of quiet listening for some people and relieved sharing for others.



The journey of each person is unique, with some moving into the **acceptance** stage rather quickly and others a little more hesitantly. They become more adept at learning to read speech on the lips, face and jaw and how to make challenging situations easier. It's quite amazing to witness members excited because another felt comfortable enough to give friends detailed suggestions on how to make conversation easier -- and they did! They cheer when someone describes their success at managing a complex phone call to a doctor's office.



They listen to suggestions from those who have been in the classes a little longer and talk about what might actually work for them. They may decide to join an advocacy group or make suggestions at their house of worship, city hall or book club. They may not be 100% comfortable all the time but they have arrived at a good place.

How can we prevent Noise Induced Hearing Loss?

Did you know that more than one billion teenagers and young adults are at risk of hearing loss due to unsafe exposure to damaging levels of sound¹. This alarming statistic comes from the World Health Organization (WHO).

The WHO has designated March 3rd as World Hearing Day. This year's theme, "Making Listening Safe", highlights the risk of noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) and the measures to prevent it. We live in an increasingly noisy world and the incidence of NIHL is rising significantly.

How loud is too loud? In determining the risk of acquiring NIHL, you must look at the level of sound you are exposed to, the duration of exposure and your distance from the sound source. Sound is measured in decibels (dB). For example, a typical conversation occurs at about 60 dB, heavy city traffic noise at 85 dB, while 130 dB is the level of ambulance sirens. The WHO states that the highest permissible level of noise

exposure in the workplace is 85 dB, up to a maximum of eight hours per day.

Youth are exposed to much louder levels at clubs, concerts, sporting events (100 to 110 or more decibel levels) and in their recreational use of portable music devices.

This level of exposure becomes unsafe after 15 minutes. Not surprisingly, research shows that the incidence of hearing loss among young people is increasing with one in five teens showing some degree of hearing loss (American Medical Association; Hearing Health, 2012).

In determining the risk of acquiring NIHL, you must look at the level of sound you are exposed to, the duration of exposure and your distance from the sound source.

To understand how NIHL causes hearing loss, we need to know how the ear works. Our ear basically takes sound waves from the air and turns them into electrical signals that the brain interprets as sound. There are three parts of the ear. The outer ear collects sound waves and funnels them towards the eardrum. The eardrum is then set into vibration, and the three tiny bones in the middle ear send these vibrations into the cochlea or inner ear. The auditory or cochlear nerve carries these electrical signals to the brain, where they are interpreted as sound. Exposure to loud noise and music damages the hair cells in the cochlea and eventually causes hair cell death. In humans, hair cells do not regenerate, so hearing loss from NIHL is permanent.



What is also very concerning is that research indicates that noise exposure may contribute to age-related hearing loss. (Boutin, 2014)

NIHL often occurs gradually. However it can occur suddenly after exposure to an intense sound, such as an explosion. A person may also experience a temporary hearing loss after being at a noisy event (e.g. a rock concert) and this is called a “temporary threshold shift”.

There may be tinnitus (ringing, buzzing in the ears or head) associated with NIHL.

What is also very concerning is that research indicates that noise exposure may contribute to age-related hearing loss (Boutin, 2014). “The effect of noise is cumulative, and can increase susceptibility and accelerate hearing deterioration in later life” (WHO, 2015). It seems that early noise exposure can make our ears more vulnerable to the effects of aging. It also seems that health and genetic factors may contribute to a person's susceptibility to NIHL.

On a positive note, noise induced hearing loss is preventable, but it is clear that change needs to occur at many different levels: individual, community, governmental and legislative. There is a tremendous need for educational campaigns to alert and sensitize youth and adults to the risks of NIHL.

Here are some basic strategies (suggested by the WHO) that individuals can adopt:

1. Very simply, keep the volume down on personal listening devices, i.e. below 85 dB.

2. When listening to music with personal devices, use well-fitting earbuds. This will allow the user to hear the music clearly at lower decibel levels.

3. When there is a lot of noise, users of personal listening devices tend to turn up the volume. It is advisable to use noise-cancelling earphones or headphones so this can be avoided.

4. There are apps on smartphones that allow you to know the loudness of the sounds around you and alert you when levels become risky.

5. Cut back on the time spent in noise, take listening breaks, take off those headphones. Just as we are being advised to take breaks from sitting all day at our desks, it's advised to take a break from noise and get away from it.

6. Use proper and properly-fitted ear protection when in noisy places and stand clear from loudspeakers.

7. Have a baseline hearing test to see if you have hearing loss.

We are awash in noise, and while some of it is beautiful, we must be mindful that it can damage hearing.

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Three New Funds at CHIP

In accordance with the future directions that form part of CHIP's strategic planning, we have established three new funds that will be a focus of our efforts in the next few years.

Accessibility - Funding Goal: \$20,000 for portable looping systems; FM systems for meetings and workshops, retreats and conferences; projectors, screens, computers, iPads, tablets; visual interpreters; transport accessibility to CHIP.

Prevention of Noise-induced hearing loss - Funding Goal: \$15,000 for materials for programming and tools for information-sharing; school visitations and workshops to help in raising awareness in vulnerable populations.

Core funding for programs and services - Funding Goal: \$20,000 Maintaining the excellence of programs and services such as the Outreach Program, Speechreading, ALD Program, and other workshops and activities

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Thank you very much!

We would like thank all of our donors. Your support is priceless and much appreciated. *

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