

# HEAR HEAR

## M A G A Z I N E

- “Renovations” at CHIP
- Free Hearing Aids for Seniors
- Dating With Hearing Loss
- Founding Members:  
Interview Series
- *New* Online  
Extended Edition



Spring 2019

# HEARHEAR

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**Eva Basch & Jill Johnson:**  
Speechreading instructors  
**Ashley Mayoff & Patricia Tomaszewski:**  
HEAR-ENTENDRE Animator/Facilitators

## INTERVIEW SERIES

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Please welcome our newest full-time staff member, **Amanda Dunbar!** Amanda has been CHIP's Administrative Assistant since September, 2018. For this special 40th anniversary series, she interviewed founding members and close friends of CHIP to learn the stories behind the people who made CHIP what it is today.

## CHIP Communicaid for Hearing Impaired Persons

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# Exciting Times at CHIP

How exciting to be part of such a historical event! In the **40 years** since its founding in 1979, CHIP has provided over 14,000 days (350,000 hours!) of support, programs and services to people affected by hearing loss and to the community. We will be celebrating throughout the 2019-2020 year, so please keep connected with us to hear about all the different events – after all, we are “hear” for you, and you are the heart of our CHIP family.

To help us memorialize these 40 amazing years, we are dedicating four issues of **HEARHEAR Magazine** to remembering and looking forward. For the first time, we will be printing all 20 pages of the regular edition in full color – and as if that weren't enough, a 40-page extended version will be available at the CHHA conference (see below) and online. In this issue, we will highlight how CHIP began – **our foundation** – including a five-part interview series with some of our early members.

Of course, after all this time, there are many, many influential volunteers who have left their mark. Certain names come up over and over again: Lily Bernstein's endless optimism, empathy, and leadership skills helped everybody to feel welcome the moment they arrived at CHIP. Benny Prevost and Reg Weiswall were devoted volunteers who gave generously of their time to keep CHIP's finances in order. Jack Schiess was Reg's second-in-command, but was also happy to jump in anywhere help was needed around the office. Original CHIP President Ed Plover's wicked sense of humour helped everybody learn to laugh off miscommunications, while Ken Tatebe's compassionate interventions saved many a relationship among CHIP members. Wayne Christie's influence is still visible in today's Outreach programming, while Elliot Doft's legacy lives on in the resource centre (which is named for Lily). And Social Secretary Ruth Davis worked tirelessly behind the scenes to maintain the social connections that are so crucial to CHIP's culture and ongoing success – to name just a few.



## A Word From the Executive Director

Heidi Wager

The following three issues will look into our rich history and impact over the years as well as where we currently are and, as we tie up these special editions, we will look to an even stronger future for everyone affected by hearing loss in Quebec.

If you owned a home that was 40 years old, it would have been through a few repairs, renovations and restorations. Over the last five years we have done a lot of renovating and modernizing at CHIP. Adapting and changing within CHIP is part of the healthy growth and prosperity of our organization and we will continue to grow over the coming years. We have some exciting “renovations” planned for this year; in order to showcase these proposed changes, we will be holding two consultation sessions for our members and partners (see page 7). We really want to hear your feedback, comments and suggestions. They are very important to us!

We hope to see many of you at the CHHA Conference in May!



## FYI: How It All Began

After completing my Master's degree in Human Communication Disorders from McGill University (specializing in audiology), I got my first position at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in the Notre Dame de Grace neighborhood of Montreal in the fall of 1977. I was working there alone and was sometimes nervous and unsure of myself, but determined to do my best and be a good Audiologist for my clients, (except back then they were called patients). At that time, in hospital audiology clinics, most of the work involved testing people: one client an hour, five days a week. I liked the work and really enjoyed interacting with my patients. Some clients had normal hearing or very mild losses, or were candidates for surgery, but others had very significant permanent hearing loss.

After a few short months of working, I realized there was something important missing in this audiology service - and that was time to help clients with significant hearing loss and communication difficulties. After the testing, when we had a few minutes to talk, clients expressed their

# How the Foundation Was Laid

By Dale Bonnycastle

frustration, upset, and distress about their hearing loss and its impact on their lives. Often, clients would say, "I feel so bad in a group because I miss so much. I never hear the punchline of jokes and just stand there while everyone else is laughing. I cannot cope with noisy social situations, and talking on the phone is a nightmare. I love my grandkids but cannot understand what they are saying half the time."

There was no time in the one-hour appointment slots to deal with these concerns, and I was becoming very frustrated with this situation. I wanted to go further and see how some of these difficulties could be helped, but the question was, how? Also, there was really nowhere to send these clients for help. I knew there was some speechreading instruction in the city, but that was about it. Learning to speechread alone, while important, was only part of the solution. Of course, adults were fitted with hearing aids - but then they were sent off to sink or swim, with only very basic information.



It was apparent to me that something needed to be done to remedy this and fill the gap in services. The challenge for me was how to go about it with limited time and resources. Hospital audiology departments are busy places with long waiting lists. Doctors need hearing test results to see who is a candidate for surgery and to make their diagnosis. Time was short for rehabilitation.

I realized an Aural Rehabilitation Group needed to be organized, but with a unique approach, in that it recognized the psychological and social impact of hearing loss and would incorporate a strong self-help component. The focus would be on working together, sharing difficulties and information, and finding constructive solutions. The emphasis would be on client participation and discussion of difficulties, feelings, knowledge and

constructive communication strategies, blending a dose of realism, optimism and compassion. The group would provide a nonjudgmental environment where everyone was in the same boat and could be listened to and understood. In other words, the group would be supportive, understanding, client-driven and solution-focused - not audiology-driven, and not with a fixed agenda.

So I began. I started going through my files at night, pulling out those individuals who had significant hearing loss and also starting to talk about this group to new clients I met - people like Lily Bernstein, Alvin Goldman and Ed Plover. Their enthusiasm and support for this project encouraged me and bolstered my confidence. Letters were sent out offering patients an eight-week group course called Speech Reading and Communication Strategies, but all participants understood that there was a strong component of self-help in there. To bolster my self-confidence, I even took some short courses at McGill on group management.

I received a good number of replies and a room was booked in the Family Medicine Department of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. There were enough responses to have a group during the day and one in the evening to accommodate people who worked.

The group participants were motivated and felt strongly that they should not stop after the eight-week session ended. They felt that an organization should be established to address the needs of hard-of-hearing adults. Natural leaders emerged. And the rest, as we say, is history ...

Read more about these early days in the Fall, 2019 issue of **HEARHEAR Magazine**.

# Free Hearing Aids for Low-Income Seniors

by Ariane Millette, office clerk and editor at  
Association des personnes avec une déficience de l'audition (APDA)

APDA (Association des personnes avec une déficience de l'audition) is a community-based organization whose mission is to promote social inclusion of people living with hearing impairment by providing help and support services, rights advocacy, and awareness-raising activities.

APDA doesn't cover costs for hearing aids, but offers recycled hearing aids through their *D'une oreille à l'autre\** service. These aids are cleaned and repaired in a certified recycling centre and verified by audioprosthetists/acousticians (hearing health professionals). They are then given to those who are not fully insured by public or private insurance – for instance, the Quebec Health Insurance Plan (RAMQ) only covers one hearing aid for retired or unemployed individuals even if they have hearing loss in both ears. *D'une oreille à l'autre* helps decrease isolation and improve quality of life for these people.

Of course, there is no warranty on these hearing aids and there are some eligibility criteria, such as proof of low-income status and a recent (less than two years) audiogram.

If you wish to donate hearing aids, you may drop them off at a deposit location such as CHIP. You can also search for the location nearest you at [www.apda.ca/appareil-auditif](http://www.apda.ca/appareil-auditif), or mail your devices directly to APDA.

APDA thanks those who have already donated, as well as those who may be able to in the future. Your gestures, as simple as donating hearing aids, have a tremendous impact on the lives of those in need. The lack of needed assistive devices is a barrier to communication and can accelerate cognitive decline, but your gift of hearing allows people in need to remain active and independent.

***CHIP is proud to be an official APDA deposit location. Non-molded hearing aids can be dropped off at our office during business hours.***

***\* “D'une oreille à l'autre” means “From one ear to another”***

## IMPORTANT NOTE:

Our office in Quebec City – which is not as bilingual as Montreal – offers services in French only. Admission forms are available in English, but if you are unable to communicate in French, you will need an interpreter to communicate with us [Editor's note: CHIP can help with this]. Our service manager needs direct contact to verify your eligibility, clarify certain information, plan adjustments, and schedule meetings with our volunteer team of audioprosthetists and audiologists.



apda

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# RENOVATIONS AT CHIP

## Keeping Up With Our Changing Community

CHIP's board of directors, staff, members and volunteers meet annually to review and examine our organization as a whole. Over the past five years, we have collected comments and suggestions from our members, supporters and partners about all aspects of CHIP. We appreciate and value all of this information, which is so crucial to our continued growth.

Some of the redesigns you have witnessed over the last few years developed from this type of information gathering. You might remember the overhaul of our logo, the revamping of our mission, the creation of our vision statement, the development of our values, the modernizing of CHIP's branding and identity, the changing of the magazine's name from *The Communicader* to HEARHEAR Magazine, and the refurbishing, closure and redesign of some programs and services.

Makeovers are part of a healthy organization's growth, maturity and ability to consistently stay relevant to members' and communities' ongoing and changing needs.

Modifications like these in an organization like CHIP, with deep roots and a long history, are not always smooth, and it takes strong leadership, commitment, and open communication – as well as time – to explore possibilities, make changes as needed, and adjust. However, by and large, everyone has shown openness, competence, and a readiness to do what is in the best interests of our members, our community, and our organization. We have always adjusted and adapted so well to the changes we have faced because we always put the needs of our members and the future of CHIP first. This has proven time and time again to strengthen CHIP.

***With that being said, it is a fitting time, with our 40th anniversary this year and our proven track record, to review and possibly update our name. The name “Communicaid For Hearing Impaired Persons” is and always will be a part of who we are – so why should we revisit it?***

### A new name would...

- Align more accurately with our expanding mission (e.g. prevention)
- Be more inclusive of anyone affected or potentially affected by hearing loss
- Reflect changes in terminology (e.g. “Impaired” and “Communicaid”)
- Demonstrate the reach of our resources and services (as the only non-profit in all of Quebec providing hearing health support in English)
- Align with our current branding identity

### What do we need to consider in a new name?

- Does it relate to our *raison d'être* (hearing and/or hearing loss)?
- Can it be effectively translated into French?
- Will it work for another 40 years?
- Does it send a powerful message?
- Does it highlight the impact of our organization?
- Does it make an emotional connection (“feel right”) for our members and supporters?



### CHIP Consultation Sessions

Monday, April 1st, 2019

**NDG:** MAB/Mackay Centre, 7000 Sherbrooke St. W (Room TBD), 6pm-8pm

**Pointe-Claire:** Conference Room, West Island Citizen Advocacy, 68 Prince Edward Ave., 10am-12pm

**RSVP:** call or email the CHIP office by March 30th

Light refreshments and FM systems will be available. Other accommodations, including transportation, may be available upon request.

**Do you have an idea, suggestion, or comment? We want to hear from you!**



# Programs for Spring 2019

**PRE-REGISTRATION IS MANDATORY** for all programs. You must be a member of CHIP to register. Please register early as space is limited. Priority will be given to previously-registered members. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. Please note that any class with fewer than five students registered will be postponed to the next session. If you are on a fixed or low income and feel you cannot pay the membership or registration fee, please contact the office.

**TO REGISTER:** Complete the enclosed registration form and return it by mail, e-mail, or in person, to the CHIP office. Additional forms are available upon request. You can also register on our website, [www.hearhear.org](http://www.hearhear.org).

***Please inform us in advance if you need an assistive listening device or any other accommodations for a class or workshop. We will try to accommodate your specific needs.***

## Young Adults of CHIP

CHIP is recruiting young adult members. If you are a young adult who is hard of hearing, we want to support you! And we want you to get involved, maybe even by taking a seat on our Board of Directors.

We are always looking for new ways to support our young adult members. In November of 2018, CHIP sent two members to the **CHHA Youth Forum**. (see page 32 of the extended edition for all the details). We are also growing our social media presence with a new **YouTube channel**, and we continue to have jobs and volunteer opportunities for students year-round. If you are a teen or in your 20s or 30s, please reach out to us, become a member, and/or follow us on social media.



**Humans of CHIP:** In January, CHIP started a social media series called Humans of CHIP. Once a month on CHIP's social media accounts, we will be sharing a post about one of the many people that make CHIP great. The post will have a photo along with some information about the CHIP member. This month we featured Tahsin, our very talented graphic designer. If YOU would like to be featured on Humans of CHIP, please contact Abby, the program coordinator, at [abbystonehouse@hearhear.org](mailto:abbystonehouse@hearhear.org).

**Scholarships:** If you are studying and have hearing loss, there are potential scholarships waiting for you. To learn more, please email Abby at the address above. The CHHA website hosts a list of scholarships, and Abby would be happy to help you through the process.

**Youth Outing/Comedy for a Cause:** Meet other hard-of-hearing youth from across Canada! Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for details about this event, happening as part of the CHHA Conference.

## CHIP Talk

**Life after school:** Entering the Workplace With a Hearing Loss

Hi! It's your friendly program coordinator, Abby! As a recent graduate, I had many worries about entering the job force with my hearing loss. Would my new employers be accommodating? Would I not be hired if I self-disclosed in the interview? New jobs are stressful enough without these factors. If you are looking for employment and/or finished school and wondering what the next steps are for you, come join this CHIP Talk. You will hear about my journey to employment and also have an active discussion with some job placement agencies in the Montreal area. Coffee, tea, and light refreshments will be available.

**When:** 7pm, Thursday, June 13th, 2019 (90-minute info session with a Q&A)

**Where:** 7000 Sherbrooke St. West (Room TBD)

*Registration Deadline: June 6th, 2019 (To register, you can contact us via email, social media, or by phone)*

# Spring Activities

(For Members, Friends and Family)

**CHHA Conference:** CHHA's annual Conference and Educational Trade Show will be held in Montreal for the first time ever from May 30th to June 1st, 2019, at the fully-accessible Delta Hotel downtown. This conference is a great opportunity to expand your knowledge about hearing loss and learn about the technologies that are available to help. You can meet people from across Canada and discover what is happening regionally and nationally. To register, please visit CHHA's website: [www.chha.ca](http://www.chha.ca). You will find the link to register under the "Event" tab. If you would like more information or help with registration, please contact CHIP.

**AGM:** Members are invited to join the CHIP team for the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on **Saturday, June 1st, 2019**. Since we are fortunate enough to be able to have our AGM at the CHHA conference this year, it will **NOT** be held at our NDG location. Please call or email the office to RSVP by May 10th, 2019

***Please contact CHIP if you would be interested in group transportation to the AGM from NDG and/or the West Island.***

## Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

Last fall we attended the Calder exhibit at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and it was a huge success, so we are doing it again this spring. Tour guides will use FM systems while walking us through the new temporary exhibit.

**Date:** Wednesday, May 1st, 2019

**Time:** 10:30am - 12pm

**Cost:** Free

**Deadline to register:** April 24th, 2019

**Transportation:** Carpooling will be available from Dorval and NDG. Please note, there will be a \$5-10 fee for passengers to help cover costs.



## Cabane à Sucre – Save the Date!

Join us for lunch and maple taffy at the Constantin Sugar Shack in St. Eustache! This is a terrific opportunity to get out of the city and enjoy a Quebec tradition in a fully accessible environment.

**Date:** Tuesday, April 9th, 2019

**Deadline to register:** April 1st, 2019

**Transportation:** Carpooling from Dorval & NDG.

Time, cost, and transportation details will be available at the beginning of March.



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## SPEECHREADING (Lip-reading)

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

### NDG

MAB/Mackay Rehabilitation Centre  
7000 Sherbrooke St. West, Montreal  
Session Fees: \$20

**Speechreading PLUS (Room C37B)**  
Tuesdays, 10am - 12pm  
March 19 - May 21

**Speechreading Beginners (Room C234)**  
Tuesdays, 1pm - 3pm  
March 19 - May 21

**Speechreading PLUS (Room C37B)**  
Thursdays, 1pm - 3pm  
March 21 - May 23

**Speechreading Evening (Room C37B)**  
Wednesdays, 6pm - 8pm  
March 20 - May 22

### KIRKLAND

Chartwell Manoir Kirkland  
2 Canvin St, Kirkland  
Session Fees: \$25

**Speechreading Beginners (conference room)**  
Fridays, 10am - 12pm  
March 15 - June 7 (no classes April 19 or May 31)



### DORVAL

Sarto Desnoyers Community Centre  
1335 Lakeshore Dr, Dorval  
Session Fees: \$25

**Speechreading PLUS (Room 202)**  
Wednesdays, 1pm - 3pm  
March 20 - May 22



All sessions include 10 classes. Please note that you must be a CHIP member to register.

## Important Dates:

# MARCH

*World Hearing Day*

- March 1st, 2019 - Registration opens for CHIP classes and activities
- March 3rd, 2019 - World Hearing Day
- March 10th, 2019 - Daylight Savings Time begins
- March 19th, 2019 - Speechreading classes begin

# APRIL

- April 1st, 2019 - CHIP Consultation Sessions (NDG and West Island)
- April 9th, 2019 - Cabane à Sucre
- April 19th & 22nd, 2019 - CHIP office closed; speechreading cancelled

# MAY

*World Hearing Month*

- May 1st, 2019 - Montreal Museum of Fine Arts
- May 7th, 2019 - Quebec Hearing Day
- May 17th, 2019 - Quebec Cochlear Implant Day
- May 20th, 2019 - CHIP office closed
- **May 30th to June 1st - CHHA Conference**
- May 30th, 2019 - Comedy for a Cause
- May 31st, 2019 - CHIP Celebration Lunch

# JUNE

*Canada Summer Jobs Recruitment*

- June 1st, 2019 - CHIP AGM, 3-4:30pm, Delta Hotels by Marriott
- June 2nd, 2019 - CHHA Conference Closing Reception & Banquet
- June 6th, 2019 - Audition Québec AGA\*
- June 13th, 2019 - CHIP Talk: Entering the workforce with a hearing loss
- June 20th-23rd, 2019 - HLAA Conference in Rochester, NY
- June 24th, 2019 - CHIP office closed

\*Our partners at Audition Québec offer similar services to CHIP, only in French. For more information, please visit their website: [www.auditionquebec.org](http://www.auditionquebec.org).

# 40

years  
/ans

Interview Series

## Alvin Goldman



Before CHIP, says Alvin, “we were adrift. We had no place to share experiences, and that was really one of the key things about getting together. Share experiences, help each other, and help ourselves.” Alvin is talking, of course, about CHIP’s founding members—or rather, the founding members of the as-yet-unnamed group that would later become CHIP. A writer and filmmaker by trade, Alvin has already told the story of CHIP’s founding several times over for *The Communic-aider*, the former name of this magazine. You can find that story in the 25th anniversary edition from 2004, available online in the CHIP archives. I have to confess, I’m a little intimidated by the prospect of writing this story about the original CHIP historian.

I ask Alvin if his hearing loss has affected his filmmaking, and he explains that theoretically, ideally, the best screenplays can communicate their content without any dialogue whatsoever. “I, as a viewer,” he explains, “appreciate being able to understand a film without being too dependent on the dialogue. Now we have captioned films, which helps tremendously . . . I get every single word, and it’s wonderful!” This expertise and appreciation are no doubt partly responsible for CHIP’s weekly captioned movie nights, which Alvin organized and curated beginning in 1984.

Filmmaking may also be partly to blame for Alvin’s hearing loss. As a young man, he was contracted by the National Film Board to produce an instructional film for the Royal Canadian Air Force to teach new pilots when and how to use the ejection devices in their aircraft. Ideally, the film would have included some “air-to-air” shots, with the camera in one plane flying alongside the target plane, capturing all the action—but due to budgetary constraints, the crew decided to create a similar effect by shooting the plane on the ground from a low angle. The only problem was, the ejection device wouldn’t work unless the plane’s engine was running—and nobody was issued ear protection.

As Alvin tells it, “It turns out that the sound it was making was 140 decibels, and we weren’t there for 5 minutes or half an hour—it was a long shooting session!” Although Alvin suspects that he has been hard of hearing to some degree since childhood, he remarks, “I became noticeably hearing impaired after that [shoot].” Shortly thereafter, Alvin told me, he was diagnosed with Progressive Sensorineural Hearing Loss— “meaning it was going to get worse!” Alvin continues: “I went through the rigamarole of hearing aids and finally had a cochlear implant in 2003. It worked like a charm! I have no problem with volume; on the



“***But what Alvin remembers most fondly about the early days of CHIP are the human connections.***”

*Amanda Dunbar is CHIP's newest full-time staff member. For this special 40th anniversary series, she put her editorial background to use, interviewing five founding members and close friends of CHIP to learn the stories behind the people who made CHIP what it is today. Three more interviews can be found in the extended edition of this magazine, online at the CHIP website or in print at the CHHA conference.*

contrary, if anything, sound is too loud for me most of the time. The problem is discrimination: getting the sound clearly and meaningfully. Speech speed—that's the biggest problem, and it's a very difficult thing for normal-hearing people to manage if they normally speak quickly.”

Nowadays, closed captioning for film and TV is much easier to access at home, so CHIP's mini movie theatre has gone dark. But it should come as no surprise that Alvin is also one of the founding editors of this magazine (along with Muriel Davis), which (as you can see) is still going strong. But what Alvin remembers most fondly about the early days of CHIP are the human connections. He recalls coming into the office one day to help a gentleman learn how to use the Bell Relay telephone service. The man came in with a friend, and it was clear to Alvin that he relied on this friend to interpret for him, especially on the telephone, because his hearing was so poor. Alvin dialed the number for Bell Relay and instructed the newcomer to chat with the operator for a bit, so that he could see the tape coming out of the machine with the operator's words printed on it. Then the man asked the operator to call his wife. As Alvin tells it, the conversation went something like:

“Hello? What's this 'Bell Relay'?  
What are you doing, Harry?”

“I'm talking to you!”

“Well, why are you calling me?!”

“I'm learning how to use the telephone!  
What's for supper?”

Alvin laughs and explains, “I can't begin to tell you how wonderful I felt that I had helped this person in that particular way. He loved it! It was a memorable occasion for me because I'd helped someone in person—not some abstract idea I had written about—this was a human being.”

Before closing out our visit, I ask Alvin about his plans for the rest of the day, which include going for a long walk and making a big salad for supper. “That's my contribution to the eating around here: I'm a salad man.” I ask how he feels when he thinks about CHIP, and he mentions he's a little concerned, since he's not active right now. He hopes everything's going well. He gives me some good advice before showing me out, down two flights of stairs, into the freezing rain: “The important thing is that one-on-one relationship, helping a person. [Otherwise,] what's the organization there for?”

# BTW

The

# DIFFERENCE You Make

For 35 years, CHIP was completely run by countless dedicated and tireless volunteers. The total hours could never be accurately calculated, but the impact is measured by everything CHIP is today. From the memberships, partnerships, current funding sources, programs and services, magazine and even the location of our offices, all of these structures at CHIP owe their beginnings and continuity to the efforts of volunteers. Although those early helpers no longer work in the office, CHIP still values and cherishes its volunteers. Making a difference in someone's life can be done in many ways, through thoughtful and meaningful donations or by offering your time and expertise. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the CHIP office.

CHIP receives part of its funding through donations from people like you. **100% of your donations will make a difference** in the lives of people who are hard of hearing, and help protect future generations from hearing loss. To see how your donations make a difference, please visit the donation page of our website:

[tinyurl.com/chipdonate](http://tinyurl.com/chipdonate).

## Corporate Partnerships/Sponsorships

Partners and sponsors help CHIP support our members and the community through programs and initiatives for people living with hearing loss. Interested in learning more about the benefits of being a corporate partner or sponsor for CHIP? Contact Heidi Wager, Executive Director at [heidywager@hearhear.org](mailto:heidywager@hearhear.org); 514-488-5552, ext. 4500.



***Giving is not about the donations,  
it is about making a difference***

*Kathy Calvin, CEO & President of United Nations Foundation*

## Monthly Giving at CHIP *Be One Of the 40!*

For our newest fundraising campaign, **40-4-40**, our goal is to register **40** new monthly donors for our **40th anniversary**. If you did not receive our annual appeal letter, please visit our website for more information about how to set up a monthly donation to CHIP.

**We want to make it as easy as possible for you to make a difference.** Giving can fit into your life in all kinds of ways, whether by pre-authorized recurring contributions, clicking “donate” on a social media post, mailing in a cheque or stopping by the office to chat as you drop off your gift. Tax receipts are issued in February for all donations totalling \$25 or more over the course of the previous year.



## New This Year

1. You can now donate securely and safely through our FACEBOOK page..
2. We can now process both debit and credit card payments in the office, and credit cards over the phone..
3. **MONTHLY DONATIONS:** monthly gifts enable us to plan ahead and provide us with a reliable source of funding to support our activities. They can be set up online through our website or, if you prefer, you can provide us with a void cheque for automatic withdrawals.
4. **MEMORIAL DONATIONS:** Last year we received several donations in memory of loved ones. In Memory donations are a meaningful way to celebrate the life of a person who was affected by hearing loss.
5. **IN TRIBUTE DONATIONS:** You can now make a donation that honors a particular family member, friend, coworker or professional who is making a difference in your life.
6. **BEQUEST:** Providing for CHIP in your will is one of the easiest ways to make a lasting impact on people affected by hearing loss. You can decide to leave a specific amount or a residual amount (a percentage) of your estate, once loved ones and other interests are taken care of. Making a bequest is also an effective way to reduce estate taxes. A bequest is revocable, so if your circumstances change, you can change your estate plan at any time. Upon request, CHIP will provide information that our members can bring to their estate planners.

Example of Monthly Donation	Total Over 12 Months
\$2	\$24
\$4	\$48
\$5	\$60
\$10	\$120
\$14	\$168
\$20	\$240
\$25	\$300
\$34	\$408



As we settle down to a kitchen table covered with black tea, chocolate rugelach and cinnamon babka, Doreen and I take a minute to figure out the best seating arrangement. At first, Doreen offers me her regular chair so she can take the one on the outside, leaving her free to get up and down to top up the teapot or grab a few extra napkins for the sticky pastries. However, Doreen soon realizes that with my back to the windows, she can't read my lips, so she asks me to switch seats with her. "CHIP taught me to ask for what you need!" she declares, before continuing, "I can't tell you how much I miss CHIP. CHIP was like my first home."

Doreen has come a long way from the 7-year-old girl whose parents were told, in the 1940s, that nothing could be done to help her hearing. They had noticed that after recovering from a case of the mumps, young Doreen no longer answered when she was called. They took her to a doctor right away, but as Doreen recalls, his only response was "Take her home and do whatever you can with her!" Doreen's family supported her as much as possible. Her father one day brought home a pair of hearing aids from the drug store. Doreen did not find them helpful. Her mother visited every one of Doreen's teachers to secure a front-row seat in each classroom. Her brother

always looked out for her — including setting her up with dates as she got older! But Doreen really wanted a career, so when her first choice, social work, proved too expensive, she went into nursing.

Doreen attended nursing school in New Brunswick in the early '50s, where nobody but the head nurse knew she was hard of hearing. That nurse wrote in her supervision report that they would never discharge Doreen because of her hearing, since her work was top! Doreen developed her own strategies to hide the fact that she couldn't hear. For example, she always asked doctors to write down their instructions for her, citing protocol. She went on to work as an assistant to a doctor who, when he found out Doreen's secret, would be sure to come out of his office rather than speaking to her through the wall. The only problem was, when that didn't work, he would repeat himself at a yell. "Being a doctor, you'd think he would know better!," Doreen says.

Doreen finally began to wear hearing aids when her son was born in 1962. She had successfully fooled everyone — even herself — by becoming so capable and accomplished, but the one person who couldn't be fooled was a crying baby, and she worried about not hearing him when they



**“  
When I got in and saw  
Dale [Bonnycastle]  
and Lily [Bernstein],  
I felt like I was at  
home. I felt safe.”**

*Amanda Dunbar is CHIP's newest full-time staff member. For this special 40th anniversary series, she put her editorial background to use, interviewing five founding members and close friends of CHIP to learn the stories behind the people who made CHIP what it is today. Three more interviews can be found in the extended edition of this magazine, online at the CHIP website or in print at the CHHA conference.*

were alone. Doreen remembers shedding tears in the audiologist's office; it was the first time she had been formally diagnosed and offered treatment. That same audiologist, Maxianne Berger, would later refer Doreen to CHIP in time for one of their very first meetings.

As Doreen recalls, “When I walked into the hospital building, I thought, ‘What the heck am I doing here?!’ But a little voice said ‘Go upstairs.’ When I got in and saw Dale [Bonnycastle] and Lily [Bernstein], I felt like I was at home. I felt safe.” Lily asked Doreen to take everybody's names at that first meeting, and before long Doreen knew all 50 or so members and was giving talks on CHIP's behalf — the predecessor to today's Outreach program at CHIP.

Nowadays, there are many people who don't notice Doreen's hearing aid or her cochlear implant until she points them out — which she does whenever she needs to, because Doreen is no longer shy about advocating for herself and her hearing. Close friends and family members, like her now-grown son, also tend to speak up on her behalf. But her best advocate turned out to be her grandson. Now 27, as a little boy he would announce, “This is my Bubbe! If you want to talk to her, you have to come and face her so she can read your lips!”

When asked what CHIP makes her think of, Doreen replies, “Getting help, helping others... CHIP really saved my life, really and truly. CHIP opened up a whole new world and I felt I wasn't alone. There were other people in my situation. But I knew my problem wasn't as big as theirs, and that's why I felt I could give something to CHIP.”

And of course, she did! That's why the Doreen Cons Spirit of CHIP volunteer award is named after her. As we end our interview, Doreen lets slip a hint of understanding of the impact she's had: “I'm very proud of what I've done with my life. I've never said anything to anybody, but I can now. While we're sitting here and talking, it brings back memories and I can say now, I did okay. At least I think I did okay!”

## **The Doreen Cons Spirit of CHIP Award**



### **Past Winners**

- 2018:** Bob Johnstone
- 2017:** Nina Chen
- 2016:** Eva Basch
- 2015:** Barney Cons
- 2014:** Lou Brock, Dr. Joseph Gauze, Madeline McLeod
- 2013:** Lily Bernstein, Alvin Goldman, Joodi MacDonald, Ed Plover, Ken Tatebe, Reginald Weiswall
- 2012:** Dale Bonnycastle, Steve Forget, Celine Lachance, Ian Mark

# Home for the Holidays

## Campaign

From September to December, CHIP launched its second annual Home for the Holidays campaign. The funds raised during this campaign were specifically earmarked for our potential relocation. Although we were given a reprieve last year from having to move, we know that relocation is almost inevitable at some point in time. We are delighted to report that we raised \$5643.00, surpassing our goal!

Helen Keller said the best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched, but must be felt with the heart. We want to express our sincere heartfelt thanks and appreciation to everyone who rose to the occasion by offering donations, purchasing tickets, participating in Giving Tuesday and/or volunteering at the Holiday Brunch. What an amazing feeling it was to have so much support! It has energized us all.



# *A Heartfelt THANK YOU to Our Donors\**

Maureen Adelman,  
Julie (Nadeau) Angell, Maureen  
Mary Arroyave, Deborah Arsenault,  
Annick Barbery, Anne Barkman, May  
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Bissonnette, Priscila H. Bogusiak, Dale Bonnycastle, Ronald Briand, Lou Brock, Harold Brownstein,  
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John Parodo, Irene Pelletier, Martha Perusse, Bernard Perusse, Tirza Petersen, Edith Phare,  
Joyce Pinto, William Pittman, Dorothy Pocock, Leona Polger, Alex Polidoro, Edna Poole,  
Cindy Potechin, Kit Racette, Sarah Rapkin, Louise Rayment, Laura Ross, Yog Sach-  
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Wallace, Mary Walsh, Virginia  
Walsh, Charlene Webb,  
Laura Weinerman,  
Diana Wood,  
Melika  
Ziaei

## *In Memory*



Barbara Bonneville



Efsevia Sylvia Douglass



Raymond Cousineau

Donations may be made throughout the year honoring loved ones who have passed away.

\*If we have omitted a name, please accept our apologies and let us know so that we may include it in the next issue of the magazine.

# A Message from the National Executive Director of CHHA

Happy 40th Anniversary, CHIP! This is a wonderful milestone in your organization's history, and you should be very proud of the positive impact you make on the lives of people living with hearing loss throughout Quebec.

This is a special year for you, and the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association is proud to be celebrating this milestone with you by hosting the 2019 Canadian Hard of Hearing Association Educational Conference and Trade Show in Montreal, Quebec! And, while CHHA conferences have traditionally focused only on issues related to hearing health and hearing healthcare, we want to spice things up to cover more ground, and have designed a program to attract speakers on a variety of topics, including:

- Hearing Health & Hearing Assistive Technology
- Healthy Living & Aging
- Smart Technology & Digital Literacy
- Network Capacity Building

We hope that you can join us for the 2019 CHHA Educational Conference and Trade Show, an event that promises to be an informative, insightful and memorable time for all involved. To learn more and to register, visit [www.chha.ca](http://www.chha.ca).

The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA) was established in 1982 and is the leading consumer advocacy organization representing the needs of the nearly four million Canadians

living with hearing loss. With a network from coast to coast to coast, CHHA works cooperatively with professionals, service providers, and government, and provides life-enhancing information, support and advocacy to ensure people with hearing loss can overcome barriers in all aspects of their lives.

For the past three years, we have been very busy focusing on Bill C-81, the Accessible Canada Act. This legislation was introduced before the House of Commons this past spring and we hope that it will be passed in the next few months. One of the most impressive elements about Bill C-81 is the extensive consultation process with the disability community that the government undertook during the bill's development to ensure this legislation has a real impact on our communities.

The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association will be continuing to work on this legislation after it is passed to ensure the standards and regulations that are developed break down barriers for all Canadian with hearing loss. Furthermore, we will also be working across the country to ensure that businesses and organizations that are required to comply with this legislation have the resources and tools they need to be fully accessible to people with hearing loss.

To learn more about our work on Bill C-81 and other advocacy issues, visit our website at [www.chha.ca](http://www.chha.ca).

**Christopher T. Sutton** is the National Executive Director of the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association. Mr. Sutton, who was born with a hearing loss and uses both a hearing aid and cochlear implant to access communication, has had a career spanning the non-profit, private and public sectors in both the United States and Canada. He has worked in various leadership capacities for some of the largest organizations serving people with disabilities.

Mr. Sutton holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Gallaudet University and a Masters in Business Administration from the Ivey Business School at the University of Western Ontario, in addition to a number of professional certifications.



# Please, Get Me Out of the 2-Meter 'Hearing Bubble'!

By Bill Droogendyk

Hearing devices have a 2-meter limit! Must you stay within it? The challenge of distinguishing sound from noise is most evident in the space beyond 2 meters from the sound source. World-class venues with the best acoustics and best sound systems do not significantly enlarge the 2 meter 'bubble'. Noise and noisy environments remain a hindrance to hearing.

Is there a solution? Yes: reduce the distance between the desired sound and the hearing device and get 'inside the bubble'. But I'm 25 meters from the podium! Well, what if your hearing device microphone was (virtually) on stage? Easily done? Read on.

With a hearing loop, sound from a microphone is sent as an electrical current through a wire, instead of through an acoustic speaker system. The wire is 'looped' around an area, creating a magnetic field which can be 'heard' by any telecoil-equipped hearing aid. No headsets! No wires to connect! No pairing! Any telecoil-equipped hearing aid becomes a miniature personal

speaker. The microphone on the stage 'replaces' the microphone in the hearing device. The acoustic distance is now less than 25 centimeters and noise has been immensely reduced. Effective? Here's a testimonial: "It sounded like the presenter was inside my head!"

Achieving such results requires matching systems. Like hearing aids, hearing loops have industry performance standards. To meet the standard, the hearing loop signal volume level must be uniform within the listening area and must cover the range of the hearing frequencies uniformly. Similarly, the hearing device provider should set the hearing device telecoil to the appropriate standards.

Get yourself out of the 2-meter hearing bubble! A hearing loop is the only solution that works directly with the hearing aid in virtually every place you go to hear, be it music or speech. Try it at the CHIP office today! Do it again at the CHHA 2019 National Convention! Loops are planned for the check-in desk and workshops. Experience it, then advocate for it!



*Bill Droogendyk of Better Hearing Solutions specializes in assistive listening systems. Bill tirelessly promotes the underutilized and highly beneficial hearing loop system in Canada. He is a key player and partner in the Let's Loop Canada initiative and an active member of CHS and CHHA.*

*This article was adapted from "Breaking the 2 meter hearing 'bubble'", originally published in the Spring 2017 issue of HEARHEAR Magazine. Past issues of the magazine are available on the CHIP website.*

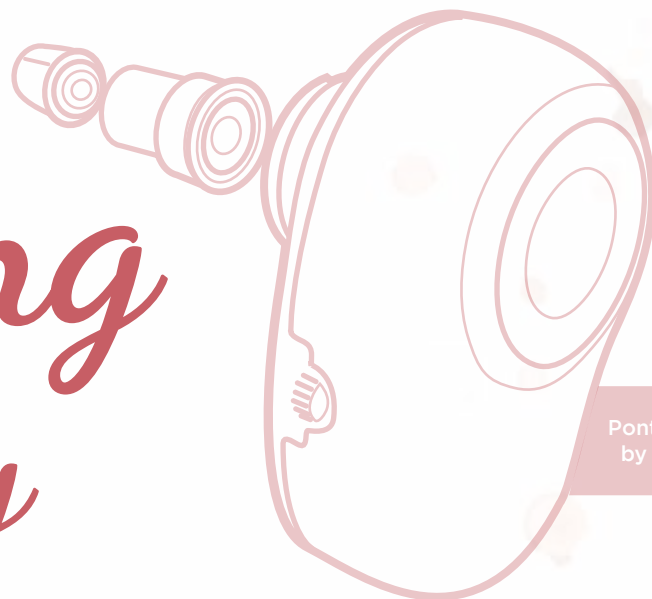
**CHIP's Lily Bernstein Resource Centre is now looped!**



**If you need your telecoil activated, or if you'd like help reaching out to a venue or community space that might be interested in looping, just ask CHIP! We have pre-written letters for you to bring to your acoustician or community group.**

# My Hearing Journey

By Virginia Walsh



Ponto 3 Superpower  
by Oticon Medical

My story starts when I was just little. My parents say that for the first four years of my life, all I ever said was “key, car!” Growing up was quite a challenge, especially when I was placed in a special school for students with intellectual disabilities, which I would attend for eighteen years. I now understand that I was actually born with a hearing loss, which in those days could be quite a rough adventure, especially when not everybody sees you for you.

In the '80s and '90s, we did not quite have the technology that we have today. What happened to me, it seems, was that my hearing loss was misdiagnosed as an intellectual disability. I spent my elementary years not knowing what was going on. I was often put in the corner or in the hallway. I was told I had won a trip to Disneyland, but never got to go. I was often bullied by my own classmates, and also the students of whatever school our satellite class was in. It felt like both the education system and the health care system had failed me – like I had fallen through the cracks. But I learned to keep on going.

When I was thirteen, I got my first hearing aids. My parents didn't know that the government was supposed to cover the cost, and the staff at the audioprosthesis office didn't mention it. Whoops again, right? As a student, I was actually supposed to be covered for both ears. Growing up, there were many things that I could not have, simply because we did not have the money. My family didn't realize that they did not have to pay for this expense.

The hearing aids were very painful and gave me infections all the time. I had started seeing an ENT specialist who checked my ears and had me go for a CT scan. That was when he told me that I basically had no ear canals to begin with! Go figure! It was as if my ears had their own earplugs! I also had underdeveloped eardrums. No wonder I couldn't hear!

The specialist tried opening my right ear canal twice, and the second time he also tried to open the left one. Boy, they hurt! Both times the surgeries failed. That was when he suggested I get a BAHA (bone-anchored hearing aid). He told me that I would need more surgeries, which I also understood would be expensive, but I was sick and tired of surgeries and strongly believed that they would not help. I was only fifteen or sixteen years old, and when you're that young, you can do very foolish things! So the ENT specialist instead prescribed the usual hearing aids for both ears – but I ended up getting just one hearing aid (I have no clue why) even though I was still a full-time student.

I was still struggling, especially as these were supposed to be my high school years. I was getting into trouble quite a bit, a good part of it because I couldn't hear instructions. I would finish with my school at the age of 21, after three years in their adult special-ed program. It was not only monotonous, it was not all that interesting. Despite the eighteen years I spent with them, I still came out knowing very little. I had a part-time job



**Virginia Walsh** is a CHIP member, volunteer and speechreading student. She loves filmmaking, photography, her cockatiel, Jolicoeur, and her two budgies, Jade and Hercules.

that paid \$7.75/hour, but for the long travel distance, high output expectations and slow, inefficient system, I decided they could eat my \$7.75/hour. I was moving on!

I started regular adult education as a full-time student in September of 2011 and got a new left-side hearing aid that November. This story sure is sounding very one sided, isn't it?! I would graduate two years later. With my academic advisor, I had originally agreed to do vocational training in PC Technical Support, but my welfare agent noted that it would be bad with my hearing loss because it required using the telephone. She passed me over to a job search agency where I underwent more IQ and personality testing (even though I had just graduated from a regular school with honours.) After looking over the results and my options, we decided that I should pursue Graphic Design, which could supplement the film-making skills I had developed in school. But when I went back to the welfare agent with this decision, to my dismay, she said no.

I would see another welfare agent after that, who suggested MAB/Mackay. The staff there asked me if speechreading was something that I wanted to do, and I said yes. After a session of classes with MAB/Mackay, I still wanted to learn more. This is how I started speechreading with CHIP. At MAB/Mackay, I had access to a trial BAHA, which worked so well that they started the process of getting me my own BAHA for my right ear. It took about two years to get from referral to an implanted BAHA.

The model that I got is called the Ponto 3 Superpower by Oticon Medical, and it greatly improved my hearing. I went on the year-long waiting list for surgery for my other ear and when June of 2018 came around, I was so happy to hear I would get the surgery done at the end of the month. Unfortunately, they called me back a couple days later to say that it had been cancelled because a more urgent case had come up. When I will ever get that surgery, or the left side Ponto, I don't know.

On a happy note, I have continued my speechreading classes with CHIP, started volunteering there, and have also taken some art classes there. I have started going back to the Youth Employment Centre, to get that ball rolling again. I want to start college again, knowing that the surgery may still happen, although when, nobody knows. I hope it will be soon! I am going to keep trying my best, and hopefully still volunteer at CHIP for years to come. I plan on becoming a teacher, but my passion is in filmmaking, so we'll see where that goes! This is my story – just one of many stories.

My hope is that this is a problem that gets recognized and eventually fixed. I have survived, and I am not alone. My hope is that maybe my story can make a difference.

*My Hearing Journey is a regular feature of HEARHEAR Magazine. In this column, members tell their stories – including frustrations, hopes, challenges and triumphs. To submit your own hearing journey, please contact the CHIP office.*



Bob Johnstone is a man on a journey. Talking with him feels like taking a guided tour of the paths he has walked throughout his life, both literally and metaphorically. Bob spends half the year in Florida with his spiritual community at Cassadaga Spiritualist Camp, and half the year in Montreal with what he describes as his natural family—including his two sisters, who also have hearing loss and use cochlear implants. One of the sisters was a patient of Dale's in the '80s and initially described CHIP as a place where Bob would be able to talk to other hearing-impaired people about how they felt—and, Bob adds, where he would be able to share with others who he was. Coincidentally, that is exactly what Bob has been doing on his spiritual journey. "What I'm looking for in my life," he says, "I found it in CHIP."

I ask Bob whether it was clear right away that CHIP was the place for him. "At first," he replies, "I wasn't too forthcoming with the other people. I mostly just listened." But as Bob heard story after story of people successfully navigating the world with their assistive listening devices, he became intrigued. "There was a lot for me to learn at CHIP," Bob continues, "and a lot of people who

handled their hearing situations to better their lives." In most social situations, Bob says, because of his hearing impairment, "I didn't want to get too involved in case I missed something and looked foolish. But here was an opportunity to grow."

I ask what would be different if Bob hadn't connected with CHIP, and he tells me that he would never have gotten his implant, which has improved his hearing 100 percent. "The resource centre," he recalls, "helped me find where I needed to go. Someone had knowledge on everything, bespoke to each individual." Perhaps this personalized attention and recognition helped Bob realize what he had been searching for. Nowadays, as a spiritual medium, Bob says, "my ability is to help people find themselves—their inner selves, their connection with a superior force. Most people aren't aware of our uniqueness, our difference. I like having people realize the uniqueness of what they have to offer."



*Amanda Dunbar is CHIP's newest full-time staff member. For this special 40th anniversary series, she put her editorial background to use, interviewing five founding members and close friends of CHIP to learn the stories behind the people who made CHIP what it is today.*

Bob's hearing journey and his spiritual journey are intimately connected. His hereditary hearing loss began to express itself when he was about 13 years old, and it was his school teacher who first noticed and suggested he see his GP. The doctor initially told him he wasn't paying enough attention in class, but the hearing loss increased over time. Bob says that even at that age, he was fascinated by religion, especially when it came to solving problems. "All those miracles," he says, "I couldn't understand why they weren't happening [for me]!" As Bob talks about connecting with a superior spiritual force, explaining that by combining intellect and intuition, we can access our true nature and earthly wisdom, he draws an analogy to his audiologist: "She's my source of information." He means that although the audiologist can offer expert opinions and suggestions, only Bob himself can make the changes in his life that will keep him moving along his path.

Bob ends our interview by telling me that it took him 30 years after joining CHIP to fully accept his hearing loss, and to understand how important that was—and, he says, "I still come back [to CHIP] for a little more. I like to build relationships, and sometimes it takes a long time." Since I've known Bob, he's had a shaved head that shows off his implant. He tells me that when he first got it, he thought he'd have to wear a hat all the time, but now it's a badge of honour. "I accept my hearing," he asserts, "and I shouldn't have to say to somebody, 'I'm hearing impaired.' They can see it!"

**“ I ask what would be different if Bob hadn't connected with CHIP, and he tells me that he would never have gotten his implant, which has improved his hearing 100 percent. ”**

# Hard of Hearing<sup>HOHSF:</sup> Single Folk

## *Dating With a Hearing Loss*

Truly, I was ecstatic when I was assigned this article. Finally! I get to share my wealth of dating experience with others besides friends and family. Then, the more I thought about it, the more my reaction shocked me. When did I appoint myself as an expert on the topic? Should all the hearing loss singles gather around in a kumbaya circle for me to reveal the mysteries of the dating world?

Let me preface: I am a 29-year-old single woman, emphasis on the single, with no signs of changing. So perhaps, technically, I have no right to tell people what works best. However, what I do have is a unique approach to dating with hearing loss, and I would like to share it with you.

Like most home remedies and unwarranted advice, I would advise to take it with a pinch of salt or paprika, if you are into that. If any aspects seems unreasonable to you, then by all means, ignore them. Otherwise, let's get right into it.

Dating and hearing loss share one thing in common: they both make us feel vulnerable. I think with dating, as with hearing loss, we all find our own way of approaching it, a way that makes us the most comfortable.

First, luckily for us hearing loss singles (HLS), we have great online apps and websites we can use to meet people. Even better, they have become the norm. We no longer have to struggle in a noisy bar to meet our prince charming (or an ok dude). We can meet them with the help of our mobile devices just sitting in our pockets. With a swipe of a finger, we are on an amazing date (or an ok one), having the time of our life (or an ok time).

I can't even imagine trying to meet someone the old-fashioned way. How would it play out when you see a tall drink from across the room, the two of you lock eyes in sparks of live wire, and he comes over and whispers "you are beautiful". Of course, you do not hear him because of the amplified shouting of a million people compensating for the loud music. Not ideal #hearingaidproblems.

This brings me to my next point: location, location, and, dare I say, location. The online platforms we use to "meet" a potential love interest allow planning. They give us, the hard of hearing single folk (HOHSF - yeah, that's better), the opportunity to orchestrate where to meet for the first time.

***“We no longer have to struggle in a noisy bar to meet our prince charming (or an ok dude). We can meet them with the help of our mobile devices just sitting in our pockets.”***

Of course, we want an accessible place for us to hear clearly. We want to hear if the person is as charming in person as they are via text. Bars are not ideal, but I have found pubs that have speakeasies are an excellent compromise. For those not familiar with speakeasies, they are parts of a pub that do not have music on in the background and, as the name explains, you can speak to one another without having to holler. I also try to meet the person during times I know are not peak hours. For example, drinks around 6 pm work way better than, say 8 or 9 pm.

Lately, my go-to spots are cafés. I prefer cafés over restaurants because there's nothing worse than having a meal without chemistry. One medium caramel latte with soy milk to go, please. They are also better suited for my hearing. A café that isn't too crowded in the evening, or at least one where I can put my back against the wall to hear better, works best. If you do prefer restaurants (you brave soul), there are hard-of-hearing-friendly restaurants. For a list of those, I would like to direct you to Debra Fisher's article in the Fall 2018 issue of *HEARHEAR Magazine*. For the speechreading HOHSF, in my experience, cafés tend to have better lighting than bars and restaurants mainly because people are using those places as their own personal travelling office. They also tend to have smaller tables, which makes it easier to speechread and to hear.

Finally, full disclosure, when do you bring up the hearing loss? When I started dating with my hearing loss I struggled with this. I was young then (still am), and wearing hearing aids is uncommon for my age group. How do you go about it? Should I casually drop it in a fourth or fifth text message? "Hey, how was your day? Oh, by the way, I have a moderate hearing loss." Perhaps I could be more mysterious: let them notice my hearing aids glinting behind my ears, much like a lighthouse on a foggy night.

I have experimented with both of these methods. Ultimately, I try to get it out of the way quickly. I do not want it to seem like I am ashamed of it, because quite honestly, I am not. It may sound strange but I kind of enjoy that I'm unique.

No one I have dated has had a problem with my hearing loss. I once asked a partner what he thought about me having hearing loss, and he very honestly put it, "It's annoying at times, but I like you, and there are worse things". I appreciated his honesty, because quite frankly, if I had to describe dating with hearing loss in one sentence my response would be "It's annoying at times, but I like dating, and there are worse things".



*Abby Stonehouse is the Program Coordinator at CHIP/CAPA. She is a recent graduate of Concordia University, with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology. She is also a stand-up comedian, who made her OFFJFL debut this summer at the Just for Laughs 2018 festival.*



Lou starts our phone call by asking about the weather—a seemingly innocuous question unless you know that it's January and he's calling from Florida, where he's already installed for the winter. He'll be back in March, at which time, he tells me, he is usually greeted with a snowstorm upon his return to Montreal—the city's way of welcoming him back.

Lou exemplifies a sentiment I've heard from many of the people I've interviewed for this series: to him, CHIP is like family. "I was always looking forward to doing something for CHIP," he recalls. "CHIP became part of my life. My family knew about CHIP and they were always making fun of me, that I spent more time at CHIP than I did at home." That's no surprise, considering what a special place CHIP is for those who know and love it, and what an active community member Lou is by nature. When I ask him how he likes to spend his time, he tells me about the St. Luc Men's Club, of which he is an active member, attending meetings and activities about three times a week, plus the gym twice. That's when he's in Montreal; in Florida, he spends as much time as possible outdoors. I try to suppress a twinge of jealousy upon hearing this!

The work that Lou most remembers doing for CHIP is working with Alvin Goldman on weekly captioned movie screenings, organizing and hosting the evenings with films and refreshments. He also helped Joodi MacDonald in the HEAR program (not to be confused with HEAR-EN-TENDRE), co-facilitating sessions on common experiences of living with hearing loss, and eventually took over the role. He also provided a less-than-stellar review of a captioned movie at the Cineplex in Cavendish Mall for the CHIP membership: "I didn't like it because I didn't know whether to look down at the captions or up at the movie!"

Lou's wife noticed his hearing loss before he did and "took him by the ear" to their doctor. "I was in denial," he says, "just like everyone else!" He ended up joining CHIP the same way many do: badgered by a friend for some time before finally being dragged to a meeting. Lou says now, "I just didn't feel that I wanted to go." But... "You're gonna love it!" said Lou's friend, Jack. "I'm not gonna love it!" replied Lou... "But you know what, I did love it."

I ask Lou, what was special about CHIP? He responds easily: "The people—we were like a family. I liked to help wherever I could—filing, mailing. I loved it because it was part of me. I couldn't hear, and they couldn't hear! I'm a people person and I like to help people. I keep very busy. I can't sit still!"



*Amanda Dunbar is CHIP's newest full-time staff member. For this special 40th anniversary series, she put her editorial background to use, interviewing five founding members and close friends of CHIP to learn the stories behind the people who made CHIP what it is today.*



*“The people—we were like a family. I liked to help wherever I could—filing, mailing. I loved it because it was part of me. I couldn’t hear, and they couldn’t hear!”*



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# CHIP's Young Adults Attend CHHA Youth Forum

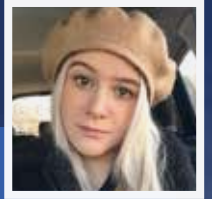
by Abby Stonehouse

In November 2018, the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association (CHHA) held its Youth Forum in Ottawa, Ontario. The theme of this forum was "Be Heard and Thrive". This was an exciting opportunity for young adults with hearing loss to meet individuals like them and expand their understanding on the topic. CHIP wanted to give two young members a chance to attend this forum. As someone who is hard of hearing, I knew what an exciting time this would be. And as most of our readers know, it is so beneficial to meet others who share the same challenges you face. It is a time to be inspired by the other attendees, meet new friends and learn how others might use their hearing loss as a strength rather than a weakness.

CHIP sponsored two of our young members to go to the youth forum: Ashley Mayoff and Tahsin Mohammad. Ashley was born with a hearing loss and wears a BAHA (Bone Anchored Hearing Aid). She was our Hear/Entendre animator in the summer of 2018 and is now in her last semester at Dawson College in Social Service. Tahsin was also born with hearing loss and received a cochlear implant during elementary school. Tahsin has been CHIP's graphic designer for over two years now. They are two very inspiring individuals. I cannot think of two individuals more deserving of attending this wonderful forum.

This Youth Forum is held every year by CHHA, in locations all across Canada. CHIP hopes to be able to send more young members in the years to come. If you would like to hear more about Ashley and Tahsin's experience, go to our Youtube channel and watch our interview with them.

CHIP is always on the lookout for more young adults who are affected by hearing loss. If you know of any — or are one yourself — and would be interested in hearing more about CHIP, please contact me. The more young adults, the better!



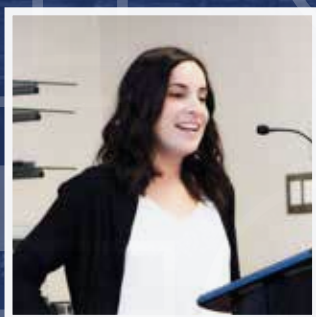
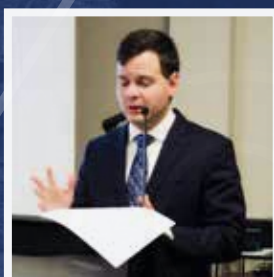
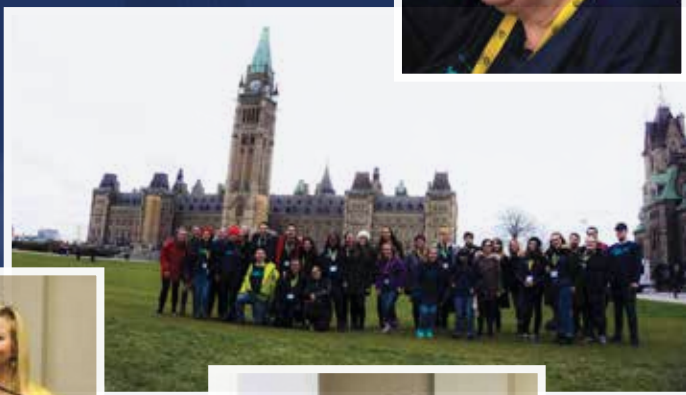
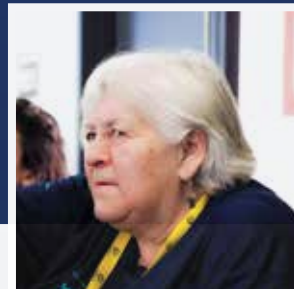
## Testimonial from Ashley Mayoff:

*The CHHA Youth forum was a very memorable experience. I learned about many different aspects of hearing loss and met youth from all over Canada. There were various guest speakers, such as deaf artists and others who shared their experiences with barriers within the education system and workforce. I learned a ton of new tips and tricks in regards to navigating the world as a youth who is hard of hearing. We had many discussions about what it means to be hard of hearing, and how everyone identifies with their hearing loss in a way that is unique to them. The experience and knowledge that I gained from this conference will be something that I will never forget, as well as the amazing people I met and the memories that I will cherish forever.*



## Testimonial from Tahsin Mohammad:

*I am very appreciative that I was able to go to the CHHA Youth Forum. It was definitely one of the highlights in my life. I learned each person has their own experience with their hearing loss journey, their education and life situation. I acquired knowledge about the guest speakers, how they adapted to their hearing loss in a work environment and what their main goals are in life. Their experiences made me learn so much and I gained in understanding what their hearing loss means to them. I will never forget and I cherish the moments. I met the most marvelous people ever. Be thankful for who you are now and keep moving forward in your career.*



## Interview Series joodi MacDonald



People say that when joodi (her preferred spelling) was a little girl, she only cried when her mother was looking. That's because her mother wore a hearing aid and needed to see joodi's face to be able to communicate, just like joodi does now. Because joodi's mother was hard of hearing, she understands hearing loss from both sides. She also picked up her mother's coping strategies by osmosis—things like where to place herself in a room or how to hold her head at a certain angle to catch what somebody is saying.

Sitting across from joodi at the CHIP conference table, I feel privileged to be the recipient of some of the limited energy she has for conversation these days. "I'm very selective about what I do with my communications," she tells me. "I basically don't hear anything clearly except vowels. Imagine a conversation that's mostly vowels!" joodi is extremely self-reflective about the tools and strategies she uses to function despite her limited hearing. For example, six years of Latin and a basic knowledge of linguistics prepared her to decode spoken language even while missing most of the sounds—no easy feat.

joodi explains that she uses rhythmic and syntactic clues to tell her what questions to ask to fill in the gaps. "Once you have a little bit," she explains,

you can ask, 'you met so and so where?' instead of going 'huh?', because endless 'huh?' doesn't do it for people. They find ways to be busy elsewhere." joodi thinks of her strategies as tools in a toolkit handed to her by the universe via a lifetime of observing and learning from the people she's known.

"For me," says joodi, "CHIP was my second career. I'm not a person who sits around—I need to do something constructive!" joodi helped with mailings at first, then she took on publicity. She was also the final speaker in the HEAR program (not to be confused with HEAR-ENTENDRE), a series of informational workshops for CHIP members. After participants had learned about the science of hearing health, assistive listening devices and how to get them, strategies for coping with hearing loss and dealing with the emotions around it—all from hearing health professionals—joodi would facilitate a final session about the day-to-day shared experiences that many members had in common. She remembers one woman talking about having trouble with her bridge club; by the end of the session, a new bridge club was born with three hard-of-hearing members who had only just met. Another time, the whole group of 60 or 70 HEAR "graduates" decided to hold a potluck lunch to celebrate together. When joodi



“ *That’s what I liked best about CHIP: people would go from being way down in the dumps to thinking there was a future.* ”

*Amanda Dunbar is CHIP’s newest full-time staff member. For this special 40th anniversary series, she put her editorial background to use, interviewing five founding members and close friends of CHIP to learn the stories behind the people who made CHIP what it is today.*

pointed out that this would create the worst possible listening conditions, they said, “we’re all deaf, we understand!” joodi marvels, remembering: “The worst possible situation, they could deal with—with the right support.”

For context, joodi explains that at that time (mid-’90s), ENT doctors would tell people they were going deaf and there was nothing they could do. Joodi used to challenge them—“there’s nothing *you* can do!” After experiences like that, she continues, “people would come in on the first day looking down. By the time we got them some coffee, tea, cookies and a loop system, they were looking so much brighter.” joodi finds that the people in her life who have had trouble adapting their style of communication to accommodate her hearing loss, like speaking one at a time over dinner, are the ones who knew her when she was hearing. That’s a common issue, she tells me, which is why couples would sometimes come into the CHIP office glaring at each other. “She only hears what she wants to hear!” was a common refrain. But after 40 minutes chatting with Ken Tatebe (former CHIP ED), joodi says, “they’d come out floating, beaming, saying, ‘isn’t he wonderful?’ And then they’d come back for tuneups. That’s what I liked best about CHIP: people would go from being way down in the dumps to thinking there was a future.”

One of joodi’s lessons is, “whatever problem you have, if you get into dealing with it, you’re going to learn all kinds of new and exciting stuff.” Unfortunately, health problems have kept joodi away from CHIP since about 2013, so she’s had to find ways to continue learning and growing from home. One of the ways is by reading Buddhist philosophy, which she finds soothing. “I always think, ‘you have to save the world!’” joodi reflects. “but no, you don’t—but if your neighbour needs help with three bags of groceries, step right up! If you can help, you help.” joodi believes that we all have something to do, and if we pay attention, the universe will present it to us.

After talking with joodi for a while, I can’t help but exclaim, “you’re very quotable!” Her response is immediate— “I taught; I should be able to phrase things in a way where people will remember!” joodi is clearly a natural teacher, but she says, “when I realized I couldn’t teach anymore, I thought, now what am I doing go do? And it struck me that I was well-equipped to do this kind of work [with CHIP]. I don’t know if there’s anything else I could have done that would have made better use of what I had to offer.”



# HEAR-ENTENDRE: Preventing Noise-Induced

If you read our fall 2018 issue, you know that the HEAR-ENTENDRE project began in the summer of 2018, with CHIP animators visiting summer camps. HEAR-ENTENDRE is a program where children aged 8-12 years learn about noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL). With more and more young people being exposed to noise, CHIP decided that something had to be done to begin raising awareness about this serious issue.

In just eight weeks, we were able to reach almost 500 children. We saw such an impact during the summer with this program: kids enthusiastically wanted to learn about sound, the ear and how they could protect their hearing from dangerous sounds. CHIP wanted to continue the momentum by going into schools and teaching students in grades 5 and 6 about NIHL.

In order to do this, we partnered with The Hearing Foundation of Canada (THFC) whose Sound Sense program has been used in schools in some areas of Canada for a number of years. Sound Sense is an education-based program, a good complement to the recreational presentation CHIP developed and implemented over the summer. Both presentations cover the same important issues related to NIHL.

Sound Sense presentations start with a discussion about sound in general, their favourite sounds (the sound of a candy bar being unwrapped seems to come up often) and their favourite song or music.

We continue with discussing how sound is measured in decibels and the difference between low and high decibel sounds. During this discussion, children are familiarized with the sound meter and they really enjoy measuring the sounds they themselves make — tapping on their desks or saying “shhhh,” for example.

Our animator then plays a 15-minute video covering sound, the ear, how loud sounds can damage the ear, and how to protect your hearing. Unique to CHIP, this is followed by a Hearing Journey: a short, personal anecdote from the animator, who herself is hard of hearing. This part of the presentation educates the students about living with hearing loss, some of the challenges a hard-of-hearing person might face, and how they, as individuals with “normal” hearing, might feel if they had to face these challenges.

## What Can You Do?



**Turn Down the Volume**



**Walk Away from Loud Sounds**



# Hearing Loss

Most importantly, we teach children how to prevent NIHL. Sound Sense relays 3 prevention methods: *Turn Down*, *Walk Away* and *Use Ear Protection*. CHIP adds an additional prevention method: *Less Time*. We highlight that throughout our lives, we take precautions such as applying sunscreen, wearing a helmet on a bike, and using a seatbelt to protect ourselves. Protecting our hearing from the loud sounds in our environment should be a priority as well. NIHL is 100% preventable, and once your hearing is damaged, you cannot get it back.

In December, we had four presentations and over 70 students participated in this program. In January, we had 13 presentations, with an estimated 260 students attending.

We have received some great feedback about the HEAR-ENTENDRE program thus far from the educators in the classrooms:

***“Overall great presentation! Students seemed very interested and actively participated throughout the entire presentation. Great idea giving the students earplugs.”***

***“Much needed presentation for this group!”***

***“Great, engaging and informative presentation!”***

Our goal for 2019 is 80 presentations. With the help of University of Montreal audiology students, we plan on extending the reach of the program to even more schools across Quebec. We are also looking forward to going back to summer camps in summer, 2019. We are well on our way!

If you would like more information, want to get involved, or would like to book a presentation, please contact the office.

*Photo credit:  
Tahsin S. Mohammad (iVision Photography)*

HEAR  
ENTENDRE



Less Time on Personal Devices



Protect Your Ears with Earplugs

# Putting Self-care First:

## A checklist for individuals with hearing loss.

By Martha Perusse

Anyone who has ever flown in a commercial airplane has seen the flight attendant give the safety instructions: in the event of a loss in cabin pressure, you are informed, place the face mask on yourself before helping others. This makes perfect sense in such a context, but in our own daily living it may seem odd. For some people, it is really challenging to think of oneself first.

As a coach, I see people who are burned out, exhausted and overwhelmed — and one of the major contributing factors is often a lack of self-care.

Self-care involves making the effort to consider various aspects of life (such as the physical, emotional, financial and professional components) and questioning ourselves. Am I living the life I want? Do I feel there is a purpose to what I am doing? Are there things I could be doing better? Are my days balanced with rich moments of calm, some stimulating, creative or exciting tasks, time for others and time for myself? These are just a few of the ways one can evaluate general quality of life.

If you have a hearing loss, there is an added layer of self-care needed. Being hard of hearing can add stresses and frustrations, and there is a whole gamut of new skills and tasks that require our attention. We have to learn more about hearing loss in general and our own hearing in particular. Being knowledgeable medically is important in all aspects of our health and we may need to devote some time to reading and consulting with professionals. Learning about hearing aids and assistive listening devices also takes time and effort, but it can make all the difference in making the very best of the hearing we have.

Developing the skills to advocate for our own needs can also be really challenging. It's a whole new skill set that takes persistence and patience — and a sense of humour. It can be a time for grieving the hearing we had and facing the reality of relationships that can be more — or less — than we may have expected. The courage to seek out supportive groups like CHIP (in Montreal), the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, or the Canadian Hearing Society can pay off in finding resources and a new community of supporters who have walked the same walk as you.

In order to guide the process of becoming an expert in your hearing loss, I have created a checklist of over 50 goals to consider. The items on this checklist are meant to be guidelines to strive for — a sort of pathway to feeling in control of your hearing. You may find it necessary to have the assistance of a hearing health professional, an audiologist, an ALD technician, or a CHIP volunteer, peer mentor or instructor. A supportive family member or friend can also be a godsend. You may even want to try working with a coach!

So grab a pencil and a cup of your favorite relaxing beverage and see how you stand in evaluating your hearing-related competencies. You may find you have accomplished many of these items already — good for you! Or you may feel overwhelmed and unsure where to start. Don't worry! In many cases, the goals will be longterm and require you to continue to learn and grow. And that's always a good thing.



Martha Perusse is a Professional and Personal Coach and President of the CHIP Board.

# A Checklist for Individuals with Hearing Loss.

## Over 50 competencies related to hearing and becoming the best you can be

### Dealing with my hearing loss medically

- ☐ I understand the facts of my hearing loss (can “read” my audiogram)
- ☐ I can describe my hearing loss in specific terms (type, degree)
- ☐ I can discuss possible changes to my hearing with my hearing health professionals
- ☐ I see my ENT doctor on a yearly or biannual basis, as requested
- ☐ I have regular audiology appointments or mapping appointments for my cochlear implant, as needed

### Dealing with amplification and technology

- ☐ I understand how my hearing devices (hearing aids or implants) work
- ☐ I understand the advantages and limitations of hearing aids
- ☐ I see my hearing aid acoustician as often as needed
- ☐ I know about the Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs) that can help me
- ☐ I know how my ALDs work
- ☐ I see my hearing technology (ALD) professional as needed
- ☐ I check in with my acoustician and/or audiologist for any new technology on the market
- ☐ I know how to activate the captions on my television and use them when necessary
- ☐ I make use of technology such as smartphones (e.g. texting, Skype, Bluetooth technology) or computers (email, Skype or other real-time video communication)

### Developing a knowledge base

- ☐ I stay informed about issues related to hearing loss (blogs, websites, magazines)
- ☐ I belong to an organization(s) that supports individuals with hearing loss (CHIP, CHHA, CHS, HLAA, etc.)
- ☐ I know about strategies for dealing with challenging listening situations (lighting, distance, noise, etc.)
- ☐ I know about devices that can help in challenging listening situations (such as FM systems, Bluetooth technology, hearing loops, infrared systems, adapted telephones)

- ☐ I know which devices I am eligible for under Medicare
- ☐ I know about cochlear implants, even if I don't have one
- ☐ I know which professionals I can ask when I have questions or concerns
- ☐ I know if I am eligible to receive financial credits or compensation because of my hearing loss

### Becoming my own advocate

- ☐ I eliminate background noise as much as possible in my home to help me use the hearing I have
- ☐ I am open to talking about my hearing loss and listening needs with my family and others
- ☐ I let unfamiliar people know I have a hearing loss when we start a conversation
- ☐ I ask people to repeat and rephrase when I don't understand
- ☐ I let people know what I need to improve understanding
- ☐ I practice strategies that work for me such as asking for written notes, asking for clarification
- ☐ I confirm numbers that arise in a conversation (is that 1-5 or 5-0?)
- ☐ I ask people to move to a better location with me if I need to for less noise, better lighting
- ☐ I choose restaurants/venues with better listening environments, if I can
- ☐ I arrive early at a meeting to get the best seating for me
- ☐ I prepare for stressful listening situations ahead of time as much as possible to minimize feeling isolated or overwhelmed (confirm the topic, ask a friend to clue me in, carry pencil/paper, talk 1 on 1 as much as possible, minimize bluffing)
- ☐ I choose group activities that are compatible with my level of hearing
- ☐ I know about interpreters (oral and sign language)
- ☐ I know about captions and use them at public events, such as movie theatres, and conferences, as needed
- ☐ I request and make use of ALDs at public events, such as lectures and conferences

Continued  
Next Page



# A Checklist for Individuals with Hearing Loss.

Over 50 competencies related to hearing and becoming the best you can be

## Safety

- ☐ I wear a medic alert ID or carry the “blue card” from the Canadian Hearing Society or CHIP, indicating my hearing loss
- ☐ I have a “broken ear” sticker on my Medicare card
- ☐ I have informed my physician, dentist, optometrist and others about my hearing loss and how best to communicate with me
- ☐ I have informed the fire department that I have a significant hearing loss
- ☐ I have the alerts that are helpful for me (flashing lights for door, phone, alarms)

## Self-care

- ☐ I know that having a hearing loss is physically exhausting and take care of myself
- ☐ I try to get as much sleep as I can
- ☐ I have developed techniques to help me relax when I feel overwhelmed (meditation, deep breathing, etc.)
- ☐ If I am feeling the need for counseling, I seek out professionals until I find one who is a good match for me
- ☐ I have found ways to maintain my fitness and mobility despite my hearing loss
- ☐ I have friends with whom I can spend time when I need companionship
- ☐ I have hobbies and creative outlets that are satisfying to me

## Making improvements

- ☐ I have taken or am taking classes to help me communicate better such as speechreading, signed English, American Sign Language (ASL)
- ☐ I participate/have participated in aural rehabilitation to learn to use my hearing aids or cochlear implant, as appropriate
- ☐ I practice my skills (e.g. watching TV without sound or repeating phrases in a mirror, practice listening with others or using a computer program/app, as appropriate for my hearing loss)
- ☐ I practice strategies to help me understand on the phone, in poor lighting or in noisy situations

## Supporting others

- ☐ I am open to talking about my hearing loss when others question me
- ☐ I educate others about hearing loss in general
- ☐ I encourage those who are concerned about their hearing to seek help
- ☐ I share my experiences in groups
- ☐ I volunteer for an organization that supports those with hearing loss
- ☐ I informally support others with hearing loss



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