

HEAR HEAR

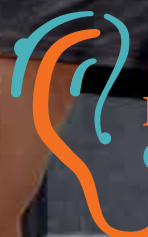
M A G A Z I N E



Arts & Accessibility

**FALL
2022**

Erich Preach and Abby Stonehouse
Find out more about our fully accessible
comedy event inside on pages 14-15



Hear Entendre
Québec

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ISSN: 2370-7089

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Doreen Cons, Alvin Goldman

These members have touched us and supported the organization for years. We will miss them dearly.

David Tait, Catherine Tomson, Leiba Aronoff, Ralph Berg, Aimé Masliah

In loving memory of David Tait, who was a dedicated member of Hear Quebec and served as Board President in 2015 - 2017. We would like to send our deepest condolences to his wife Pamela and his family.

We were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Mr. Aimé Masliah. He was a wonderful partner and a strong supporter for several years. His generosity and dedication to our mission was remarkable. We will continue to honor his memory as we plan future events together with Masliah.

We have been honored to receive our first legacy gift from the estate of the late Catherine Thompson. Her devotion and compassion to our mission are greatly appreciated. We will honor her by ensuring her legacy has a lasting impact.

A Word from the Executive Director

Awareness & Accessibility

During our strategic planning, it became clear that awareness and accessibility were going to be a big part of our work over the next 3 years. We have a responsibility to play in removing barriers and making our world more accessible for everyone. Our ultimate goal is more accessible environments for people with hearing loss. At **TED2013**, Mohamed Jemni said that **“The disability is not the problem. The accessibility is the problem.”**

There are many organizations and companies that help with making accessible equipment available, such as hearing aids or specific assistive listening devices such as amplified phones or TV audio systems. In fact, many of them are our partners and serve our members and the community very well. We really wanted to find the best way for us to assist with this process.

Many surveyed individuals reported that there seems to be a gap in the availability of people to help support the use of the equipment once it has been all set up. **What happens once the expert leaves?** What if you don't use the equipment for a few days or weeks, or it just stops working? That seems to be a large source of frustration for users.

“The disability is not the problem. The accessibility is the problem.”

- Mohamed Jemni



That is where we can step in by using a compassionate and peer-centered approach with our new Accessibility Ambassadors.

The idea of community health workers has been around for years. We know many people versed in specific areas, especially around managing their own accessibility needs. With a little training and support from the experts, we will be available to assist newer users as they learn to navigate their own accessible hearing journey. People need ongoing support while using technology and throughout their life. As trained Accessibility Ambassadors, we will be able to offer that support on an ongoing basis while in collaboration with our valued partners.

We are talking with some of those valued partners now and starting to develop the structure of what this initiative will look like. We need some time to develop the program, partnerships, and build capacity to start offering it. We will continue to apply for grants to enable this project to grow.

There are many ways you could help, such as volunteering. You could share all our social media marketing campaigns and help raise funds for this program through our annual fundraising events, such as the **Access Comedy sponsored by Masliah**. Support this event by buying tickets or, better yet, invite some friends or coworkers so they can see first hand what accessibility looks like — barrier free and including everyone! To get involved with making our world more accessible, contact info@hearhear.org or visit our website at www.hearhear.org.

Arts & Accessibility



by Abby Stonehouse

My introduction at this point with all of you readers seems redundant. So I'm just going to get into it! I have been asked to write an article about my experience with being in the arts and having a disability. Oh boy, do I have things to say! First, let's start with the question I get most often as a stand-up comedian with hearing loss: "Does my hearing loss influence my joke writing/material?" As a comedian who is truly incapable of writing and talking about anyone else but myself, YES, of course it does. But I like to hit a healthy balance of many things in my life.

Now let's get into the nitty gritty. As all of us in the Hear Community know, hearing loss is an invisible disability. I love the art of stand up, but I have never been in an environment that was SO inaccessible to me. Here, I give to you my List of Grievances:

Music and background noise: The moment you walk into any venue, there is always blaring music and people talking over each other. Because of this it's hard to talk to the people I work with and the audience members. I can't tell you how many times I have been asked a question by a comedian friend of mine I am completely incapable of answering.

Wheelchair accessibility: Being in an old and falling-apart city, all of the venues I perform at, except for a couple, are NOT for people with limited mobility. Which truly breaks my heart. I live with limited mobility. But I am fortunate enough to be able to manage with these barriers. It truly breaks my heart that some people can't experience some art forms because of this.

Lack of closed captioning and ASL: These accessibility measures are not part of the narrative in stand-up comedy. When it is considered, it is often vetoed because of the cost. With more virtual opportunities these days, I am also seeing the same trend. Adding closed captioning to live shows seems complicated and sometimes costly, but more frequently, it's not even part of the planning.



The fact that accessibility is not usually part of the narrative for this art form was further emphasized when I helped put together *Comedy for a Cause: Accessibility for All* in May 2019 with Hear Québec. Our goal for this show was to produce a **FULLY** accessible comedy show. It was easy to sell tickets to our members and CHHA members, but when promoting it to the general public, we were hit with the hard truth that hearing loss is **VERY misunderstood**. Many didn't realize the importance of some of these accessibility measures for inclusion, and how inaccessible most performing arts can be.

It was amazing to see the excitement about this show and how engaged everyone was allowed to be. The greatest outcome of this event was people without hearing loss seeing the benefit of having the added accessibility measure for their viewing pleasure. My best friend's girlfriend, who is a francophone, loved that she could follow along more thoroughly!

There are many ways the arts, not just stand-up comedy, can open themselves up to being accessible:

Relax performances

These performances/shows are adapted or modified for adults and children who benefit from a more relaxed environment.

Wheelchair Accessibility

This means barrier free access to the building, such as the use of ramps, wide enough doors and priority seating.

Visual accessibility

Accessibly visual content

Hearing loss accessibility

Captioning, ASL, T-Loop and FM systems



Abby Stonehouse is a stand-up comedian/writer/producer. Her storytelling comedy style juxtaposes her hopeful and honest approach to life with the horrific nitty-gritty of reality. Abby made her OFF-JFL/Zoofest debut in the summer of 2018 and will be part of the festival again this year. In May 2019 she performed and co-produced Montreal's first fully accessible comedy show. She is now the creator and producer of the comedy show GET FXCKED. She is also the co-producer of Comedy on Demand (formally known as Lawn Laughs) and Funny Juice Open Mic. If that isn't enough she will be dropping a new podcast this summer.



@abbypstone_mtl

Of course, accessibility is part of some peoples' narrative, and I am seeing a trend for the better in mainstream social media, to be more accessible. There are some great theaters, producers and organizations that are making an effort to be inclusive as well. In my research, I found that in many big cities you can find theaters or companies that include accessible performances.

Many of these places have reported benefits to adding accessibility. The first one is inclusion. This needs no explanation. All of us want to go to a show and not have the usual barriers we face. Another benefit of accessibility is expanding the audience base. Many of these places saw an increase in sales due to the added accessibility. The last benefit of accessibility is education. Accessibility is subtle, yet powerful. Having accessibility at art productions opens up conversations and tears down stereotypes.

I want to change people's perspectives about accessibility and lead by example whenever I can. That is why for my podcast, House of Stone, I'm making it a priority to add accessibility measures to the videos. This form of art, podcasting, is rarely accessible to the hearing loss and Deaf community. I am happy that I will offer some content for this community and have an opportunity to educate and demonstrate what accessibility looks like in the arts.

Overcoming Adversities: Doing the best we can with what we have

by Marjorie Aunos



I never thought I would end up paraplegic. How could I? We can never foresee what life has in store for us. We do what we can with what we've got at the time. When I celebrated the New Year in 2012, I was a single mom, by choice, to a beautiful and very active 16-month-old baby boy. I celebrated with my favorite people on the planet: my parents, aunt and uncle, siblings and my beautiful nieces and nephews. Life was good! After a week of fun at my parents' cottage, I was on my way back to Montreal so I could go to work for a couple of days. As I was driving on a winding country road back to the highway, my car slid on black ice. And in that instant, my life changed forever. The life I knew was gone. Forever. All that was left was a big mountain to climb and my will to parent my child the best way I could. But it also meant that I needed to figure out how I would be managing that. Adversity - big or small - happens to us all the time. This is what life brings. Joy and happiness and hurdles. What we have to do then is learn how to navigate between the two. And, most importantly, we have to learn to tell our stories in the most empowering ways.

Narration and Storytelling

When I became paraplegic, all I could say was: this thing happened to me and I couldn't do anything about it. I was the unfortunate victim of a car accident. That victim had pity on her old self and saw having a disability as an unfortunate turn of events. I even attributed to myself many qualifiers stereotypically associated with being disabled and frail. I believed I was no longer able to achieve my goals and that I could no longer contribute significantly to society. Saying these words made me even more vulnerable and weak. I was stuck in a rut and was not able to get out of my head.

Nine years later, a friend from high school asked me if she could interview me for her podcast. She wanted to empower other moms and thought my story would be inspiring to many. I accepted out of friendship, yet with much doubt: I knew I hadn't been able to inspire myself, so how could I inspire others? This is when I started speaking about this life-changing event. And the more I talked, the more I saw people listening. Each person was attentive to how I had overcome adversity. As I saw how the stories I told others had an impact on them, I thought maybe I needed to listen to my stories more carefully. This is when I realized I had to be careful how I framed those stories.

Gaining perspective on the impact of storytelling reminded me of my psychology training. In recounting our stories, we can focus on different angles, shaping how the story is being told. Each of these versions then triggers a different set of emotions.



The moment I recognised my own strengths was the moment I was able to move away from feeling pity for me, and when I felt empowered by my own story. This is my hope for anyone: focus on recognising your own strengths and speak about your journey with the acknowledgement that you too have gone through a lot and have survived it all.

I needed to choose carefully not only what story I would tell but, most importantly, how I narrate it and how I share it with others.

Inspiration comes from within

We can all draw wisdom from watching others handle the adversities in front of them. Yet it is even more powerful to draw inspiration from our own stories.

I started feeling stronger in my resolve to live a good life when I saw that my love for my son helped me survive, that my faith gave me hope and that prudence protected me while I waited to be rescued. I had never been powerless, nor helpless.



Marjorie Aunos, Ph.D. is the 2021 Inspirational Speaker of the Year, an Internationally renowned researcher, psychologist, adjunct professor in two Canadian Universities, a member at large of the Council of Canadians with Disabilities and the *Author of Mom on Wheels: the Power of Purpose as a Parent with Paraplegia*.

You can follow her and listen to her inspirational speeches on her social media accounts, and on www.speakerslam.org or rollfwd.com.



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@marjorieaunos



Marjorie Aunos



@themarjorieaunos

Peer Mentoring

Do you ever feel like you just need to talk to someone who “gets” what you are going through?

We are proud to announce that this summer we launched the Peer Mentoring Program! We already have 5 mentors who are here to help you navigate your hearing loss and live your best lives. Each of our mentors has had years of lived experience with their hearing loss and has received training on how to best apply that experience to provide you with tailored support.

What is peer mentoring?

It is the exchange of knowledge and support between a trained mentor and a mentee. Often seen in a professional context, what is special about this program is that it allows our members to use the skills and expertise gained through their own experience with hearing loss to be a positive and impactful role model for others.

How do I know if I need a mentor?

For someone who has received a new diagnosis of hearing loss, there can be many questions about what to do next. Mentees will receive guidance and support as they navigate their hearing journey involving audiologists and acousticians. Mentors will share how their experience with hearing aids, communication skills and assistive listening devices has made their environment more accessible. Needing support is not just for the newly diagnosed: is a change in your hearing situation causing difficulties for you? Do you have new hearing aids or ALDs that you are struggling to adapt to, or perhaps you just feel that you could be managing your hearing loss better? Hearing journeys evolve over time, and it is never too late to ask for help.

Would I make a good peer mentor?

A great peer mentor is someone who has accepted their hearing loss. They are not afraid to discuss their hearing loss needs. For example:

- They will share communication strategies with their friends and loved ones.
- They will self-advocate, at venues and with the general public, that they require accessibility features such as captioning or an FM System.
- They will use their assistive listening devices and other technologies available.

Their hearing loss is not something that holds them back from enjoying life, and they want to share their experience with others!

This is an excellent volunteer opportunity for those looking to give back to the hearing loss community. Not only will you be a supportive role model, but you will also learn new skills through the training program offered.

Peer mentoring is confidential and non-judgmental. It can help reduce feelings of isolation and the stigma that may be associated with hearing loss. It can lead to increased social inclusion, accessibility and opportunities. To learn more about our mentoring program contact info@hearhear.org. This program was developed in partnership with Audition Québec and support from QADA (Age-friendly Québec Program).



Layne Turner is the program manager at Hear Quebec. She has a BA in Sociology and 10 years experience in the non-profit sector.

Congratulations to our newly graduated mentors!



Alvin Goldberg

As a founding member of Hear Québec, formerly CHIP, and Board Director for 11 years, Alvin has seen firsthand the positive effect that peer support can have for people with hearing loss. He has led a fascinating life working in Arts and Culture.

Martha Perusse

An experienced Oral Deaf Communication Specialist and Professional and Personal Coach, Martha was the President of our Board of directors for 4 years. She continues to be a valued volunteer with Hear Québec and we greatly appreciate her amazing skills.



Peter Allan

With years of volunteer experience, including as a peer mentor with Hear Quebec's previous ALD program, Peter is committed to helping you achieve your goals! He is a skilled communicator and has varied interests from games to geography to photography.

Margaret Wallace

Her experience as a teacher and consultant has given her insight on how to be supportive. Margaret is very active and her hobbies have included travel, Scottish country dancing, and reading. Being a member of Hear Quebec has helped her greatly with her hearing loss.



Carol Chopra

A member for many years, Carol has demonstrated her skills as a community member; throughout the pandemic she supported the Safe and Clear campaign and provided her community with accessible masks. Her ability to self-advocate with her hearing loss is an inspiration.

Membership & Registration

Membership is valid between April 1 and March 31 of each year and must be renewed annually. Renewal forms are sent to each member, please confirm the information on your renewal form and return to us along with your membership fee. If you are a new member please complete the membership form and return it with your membership fee. Membership forms can be found online at hearhear.org.

Membership fee: You can pay online or in person. Payments can be made by cash, cheque, credit card, or debit card. Please make cheques payable to Hear Québec. You may also make secure payments or donations online at: <https://hearhear.nationbuilder.com/donate>.

Registration is mandatory for all programs, events, and services. Please register by indicating your interest on the registration forms and return it to the office. Only members who completed the registration will have their seat reserved. Spots will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. Register early to secure your place!

Please note: return all completed forms by mail, email, or in person to the Hear Québec office. You can also download these forms on our website: www.hearhear.org. For more information please contact info@hearhear.org or call the office at 514-488-5552 ext 4500, or on our cell 514-797-2447.

Accessibility: All programs, events, and activities will be accessible for those with hearing loss. This can include sound amplification, FM systems, or Live Transcribe. If there is a virtual event, we will use accessible platforms such as Google Meet which allows live closed captioning. If you feel that you need further accommodations, please let us know and we will do our best to accommodate your needs.

COVID-19: As the restrictions are loosening, many of our upcoming programs are scheduled to be held in person. However, in the event that stricter restrictions resurge, all of our programs will be transitioned online. Information about updated safety measures will be sent out in an email to all of the registered participants prior to the start of each program. In the event that our office is closed you will be able to make an appointment. If you are feeling unwell or have been in close contact with a positive case we ask that you not attend in-person activities. This is to protect our vulnerable population.

Access Comedy Show

find out more on pages 14-15

Join us for an evening of fun at the most anticipated event of the year! This will be a night filled with laughter, drinks and good times! Access Comedy will be FULLY accessible!

Holiday Brunch

Invite your friends and family, don your favourite outfit or ugly xmas sweater and bring your cheer.

December 3 @ 11 a.m.
Sarto Desnoyers

1335 Lakeshore Dr, Dorval, Québec H9S 2E5

World Hearing Day

Audiologist Sylvie Auger will be our special guest, more information on this event to come.

March 2 @ 2 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Online using Google Meet



Our Fall & Winter Support Programs

Resources and Referrals

Having the information you need to manage your hearing loss is so important. We offer one-on-one meetings to provide you referral services, relevant articles and tipsheets, plus many interesting and informative workshops where you can learn.

HEARTalks

This series is designed to empower members to take control of all aspects of their well-being. This series is scheduled to be in person in the fall and virtual in the winter.

Fraud Prevention and Hearing loss

Protect yourself! Make sure your hearing loss does not increase your chances of falling victim to fraud. A special guest from the Canadian Anti-Fraud Center will discuss the ways to recognize and prevent different types of fraud, and what to do if you think you or someone you know may be a victim. We will offer 2 sessions on this very important topic, one in the fall and one in the winter. The content will be the same, so please select the one that is most convenient for you!

Fall session

(In-person/Daytime)

October 6, 2022

1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

7000 Sherbrooke West, Room C234

Winter session

(Virtual/Evening)

March 23, 2023

7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Online using Google Meet

Peer Mentoring Q and A

Want to learn more about our peer mentoring program? Join us for an info session! You will have a chance to meet some of our current peer mentors to see what this program offers to both mentors and mentees alike.

Fall session

(In-person/Daytime)

October 19, 2022

2 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

7000 Sherbrooke West, Room C234

Winter session

(Virtual/Daytime)

March 16, 2023

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Online using Google Meet

Hearing loss and cognitive decline

Special Guest Joel Morin from Les Centres Masliah

You may have heard that untreated hearing loss is a risk factor for cognitive decline, but do you know why? Join us to learn about how the proper use of hearing aids could reduce the risk of dementia, as well as learn some tips and tricks to help keep your memory sharp!

Fall session

(In-person/Daytime)

November 16, 2022

10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Online using Google Meet

Winter topic

(Virtual/Daytime)

Bill 96- How does it affect you?

We will invite special guests to discuss Bill-96 and what it means for Anglophones with hearing loss.

Date: TBD. Online using Google Meet

This year all of our programs will align with our theory of change as seen in the annual report page 6. This year we are thrilled to provide in-person activities in the fall and expanded virtual activities in the winter.

Coffee Breaks

Coffee Breaks return to in-person format this fall and, if restrictions allow, we will be providing the coffee! Join us for stimulating conversation and a chance to connect and share with other members!

Fall session

(In-person/Daytime)

NDG Location

Every Tuesday starting September 20, 2022
until November 29, 2022

1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

7000 Sherbrooke West, Room C234

West Island Location

Every Wednesday starting September 21, 2022
until November 30, 2022*

10 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Sarto Desnoyers, 1335 Lakeshore Dr, Dorval,
Québec H9S 2E5

**There is no session on November 16, 2022*

Winter session

(Virtual/Daytime)

Every Wednesday starting January 18, 2022
until March 29, 2022

Online using Google Meet.

NDG Group

10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

West Island Group

1 p.m. – 2 p.m.



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DE CIRCONSCRIPTION
ET MOI SOMMES LÀ
POUR VOUS.**

**MY CONSTITUENCY
OFFICE AND I ARE
HERE FOR YOU.**



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COURRIEL | EMAIL :
MARC.GARNEAU@PARL.GC.CA

HEARING AID USER?

Experienced Hearing Aid users wanted for research study

Concordia researchers are conducting a study on cognitive, motor, sensory, and brain functioning in healthy adults in Montreal

If eligible, participants may have the opportunity to participate in a 3-month computerized in-home training program.

To get involved, you must be:

- Aged 65 - 80
- A fluent English speaker and reader
- Have age-related hearing loss requiring a hearing aid (minimum of 6-months experience)
- Free of neurological, cardiovascular, orthopedic, and musculoskeletal conditions that affect mobility, concentration, or everyday functioning
- Able to come to Concordia University's Loyola Campus in NDG for a total of four assessment sessions

A compensatory indemnity will be given for your efforts.

If interested, please contact the Li Lab for more details:
karenlilab@gmail.com



CONCORDIA

Les Rencontres

(Virtuel/En personne - *en français seulement*)

Nous nous réunirons au Centre Communautaire Hochelaga deux fois cet automne. Pour recevoir l'information sur cette activité, veuillez indiquer votre intérêt sur le formulaire d'inscription. Dates à confirmer.

We will meet at le Centre Communautaire Hochelaga twice this fall. To receive the information about this activity, please indicate your interest on the registration form. Dates to be confirmed.

Cocktail Hour

You can have cocktails and still learn something, right? Come have a drink, eat some appetizers, and learn with us!



Fall session

5 a 7 cocktails with Hear Québec 18+

(In-person/Daytime)

Come and join us for a relaxed after work or school 5 a 7 at Cordova Coffee and Cocktails in St. Henri.

October 20, 2022

5 p.m. – 7 p.m.

4606 Notre Dame Ouest

Movie Night: We Hear You

(Virtual/Evening)

We Hear You is a groundbreaking documentary about hearing loss. It was named Best Film on Disability in the June 2021 Cannes World Film Festival! By shining a light on the hearing loss experience, it strives to build awareness, community and a more inclusive world for all. Special guest Shari Eberts, who produced and is featured in the film, will join us at the end for a Q and A discussion.

November 10, 2022

7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Online using Google Meet

Winter session

Hear & Beyond: Live Skillfully with Hearing Loss

(Virtual/Evening)

Take some time over the winter holidays to read a new book by Gael Hannan and Shari Eberts and join us for a discussion! We have limited copies available to borrow (2 week loan, deposit required); you can also borrow from a library or buy it online (hardcopy or digital options.)

Biweekly starting January 10, 2023

until April 18, 2023

7 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Online using Google Meet

Scholarships for post-secondary Students

(Virtual/Evening)

Did you know that there are numerous scholarships available for people with hearing loss who are pursuing post-secondary education? Join us this evening to learn what is available and how to access these grants!

February 16, 2023

7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Online using Google Meet



BTW

An Inclusive Comedy Show For All



HA HA HA!

Hear Québec is very excited to announce our 3rd annual fully accessible comedy show fundraiser on September 25th, 2022! Live at the Théâtre Paradoxe in Ville-Émard, for the first time ever, **Access Comedy sponsored by Masliah** will host a French show at 3 p.m. and an English show at 7 p.m. Our very own storyteller and podcaster, Abby Stonehouse will host the English show and local celebrity, comedian and YouTuber Erich Preach will host the French show. You can expect a lineup of funny and talented comedians to bring their hilarious dialogues in a show you do not want to miss!



The funds raised from this event will go towards the development of our new **Awareness and Accessibility** program. This program will educate event organizers and venues on how to



incorporate accessibility measures and remove barriers for people with disabilities. We are thrilled to be working with Théâtre Paradoxe to showcase a full suite of accessibility measures and demonstrate what a fully accessible event looks like. Leading up to the show, we will be releasing weekly resources on accessibility measures that individuals can ask for and the event organizers can provide. When you remove barriers, everybody wins: people with disabilities are included in the community and events broaden their reach.

This is not our first foray into supporting accessibility at events: in early June, we provided a consultation to Seniors with SWAG and advised them of the measures they could put in place to increase accessibility. In the summer, we worked with Repercussion Theater and advised them on the benefits of allowing priority seating for speech readers, provided feedback on their subtitling platform and brought our FM systems to Shakespeare in the Park.



As an art-centric city, Montreal organizes an abundance of events and performances. However, many organizers are not aware of the challenges individuals with disabilities are confronted with when attending an event. These individuals may even forgo attending an event if it is not accessible for them. By removing barriers to these events, people with disabilities will feel motivated to attend something they do not want to miss, and by supporting events like **Access Comedy sponsored by Masliah** you will help raise awareness of accessibility.



Sima Vij is the Accessibility Coordinator at Hear Québec. She has moderate hearing loss and wears bilateral hearing aids. Sima is dedicated to helping others like her as she has been through the challenges that came with hearing loss herself. She holds an undergraduate degree in Psychology from Carleton University.

Some of the accessibility measures we will offer at the show are:

For individuals who are hard of hearing or self identify as d/Deaf:

- FM Systems are available for hearing aid users and non-hearing aid users
- T-Loop
- Captioning
- ASL / LSQ Interpreters
- Priority seating for speechreaders

For individuals with low vision:

- Sighted Guides
- Braille Tickets and programs
- Captioning in colors
- Environment will be clear of clutter and maintain safe passages in alleys

For individuals with limited mobility or wheelchair users:

- Accessible bathrooms and bar
- Wide aisles between seating
- Coat check and no hanging items off chairs
- Designated seating space
- Access ramp and elevator

More information about these measures and how to use them can be found on our website at hearhear.org.

Tickets can be purchased in our office or online at: <https://accesscomedy-accescomedie.eventbrite.ca>



ACCÈS COMÉDIE

SOUTENU PAR

Masliah

ACCESS COMEDY

SPONSORED BY

Masliah

Présentateur - FR & EN

Erich Preach

Host - EN

Abby Stonehouse

spectacle français

25 SEPTEMBRE - 15H

english show

SEPTEMBER 25 - 7PM

Théâtre Paradoxe

5959 Bd Monk, Montréal, QC H4E 3H5

ACCESSIBLE



30\$*

Billets sur Eventbrite
Tickets on Eventbrite

*Aucune remboursement No refund.

Contact:

Pour / For Info

info@hearhear.org

Tel: 514 488 5552 ext/poste 4500

Text: 514 797 2447

Hearing Journey

Waves of Sounds: From Hearing Aids to Cochlear Implants

by Salvatore Castellano

When I was two years old, my doctor made the shocking discovery that I had bilateral severe hearing loss, and it had been so since birth. Instantly, my parents made the decision that they would do everything in their power to help me learn how to hear and talk. Although it was difficult, I didn't let anything hold me back. I traveled the world, engaged in competitive inner-city soccer, represented Québec as a member of the Deaf Olympics Ice Hockey team, and began my Aerospace career as a Design Engineer, eventually advancing to the position of Program Engineering Manager.

Then one night, in March 2020, I unexpectedly lost all of the residual hearing in my right ear. At the time, I thought it was exhaustion, but the following morning, my hearing had not improved. Suddenly, I found myself having to leave meetings at work due to excruciating migraines. I couldn't concentrate because even though my left ear was working as it had, my right ear felt like it was submerged under water, and the sound distortion made lip reading difficult.

As COVID-19 was rapidly increasing, I wasn't sure how long it would take to be seen by a doctor, so I left work immediately to get my hearing checked. The ENT finally informed me that the hearing in my right ear had declined severely, and he didn't know if it would improve. Hearing this, I lost focus. Would I cease to hear? Was I going to hear my family's voice again? Would this affect my left ear too? Would the migraines that were now plaguing

me going to last forever? I quickly became so vulnerable, since I had so many different emotions: sadness, bewilderment, anger, and frustration.

My doctors believed the best course of action to help me regain my lost hearing would be to inject three cortisone shots with a four-inch flexible needle directly into my right cochlea. The easiest way to describe this incredibly painful sensation would be to compare it to the kind of brain freeze you might get after drinking a slushie too quickly. Instantly, and then for an hour afterwards, my body's temperature fluctuated with constant headaches.



While my hearing gradually improved, and I was able to understand conversations again, I had unfortunately developed tinnitus in my right ear that sounded like a persistent hissing of steam.

I had another sudden hearing drop in April 2021. Suddenly, all of my previous anxieties returned. I saw my ENT specialist immediately and received steroid pills in hopes to regain my hearing.

Unfortunately, a month later, I experienced more hearing loss—this time in my left ear. At this point, the nightmare began.

My hearing aids served no purpose any more .
My inner ear was so off balance, I couldn't walk.
The tinnitus drowned out all sounds around me, I suffered from frequent headaches and migraines. I was unable to function.

I visited another ENT specialist and gave her my peculiar medical history from the previous year. She immediately proposed administering three more cortisone injections, but this time, over the course of a week. I agreed right away because I knew I couldn't continue to live in this condition. Another painful procedure.

After a month passed with no progress, the only option was for me to get bilateral cochlear

implants. I had a consultation with the cochlear implant surgeon in Québec City following an emergency application through my ENT specialist.

In August of 2021, I underwent the four-hour bilateral cochlear implant surgery. It was successful, but the path to recovery was difficult, especially at first. Fortunately, when the bandages were taken off and I was implanted with two temporary cochlear implants, I felt an immediate release of pressure.

Pitch and tone were the first sounds I heard. Finding out how loud these pitches were was the objective. I was given the opportunity to try four different programs, but they all sounded the same to me. Strange sounds were all I heard for the following two weeks. Since I didn't recognize voices, it was frightening for me that everyone's voice had the same tone and pitch.

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Physically, I felt like I'd been put through the ringer. My jaw hurt and everything I ate tasted metallic. Because of all the unfamiliar sounds, I was mentally exhausted, and taking naps had become customary. There were times I was so queasy and lightheaded that I had to sit still. It was annoying. But I had to keep telling myself that this was all a part of the healing process.

"A new hope was kindled."

Two weeks following my operation, I traveled back to Québec City, so my cochlear implants could be officially activated. When I finally heard my parents' voices, it was an extremely emotional moment. When I returned to the hotel to unwind, I began to hear sounds that I had never heard before: running water, air conditioning, and doors closing. A new hope was kindled.

I started my eight-week treatment program at the LLM Rehabilitation Centre as soon as I got home. I received an intensive calendar of appointments with the speech-language pathologist, case worker, and audiologist. I realized I had a difficult and protracted path ahead of me. Thanks to modern technology, I can connect my implants via Bluetooth to my phone, TV, and computer. Even though I still have constant tinnitus, with time it will be drowned out with the humming of the refrigerator, boiling water, chirping of birds, crickets and most of all, the soothing sound of the ocean. As I move ahead in my listening environment, I look forward to the new sounds the future holds for me.



Salvatore Castellano is one of Hear Quebec's newest Board Members. Since a very young age, he has experienced and dealt with hearing loss. He is also a new cochlear implant user.

"Hearing well changes everything!"



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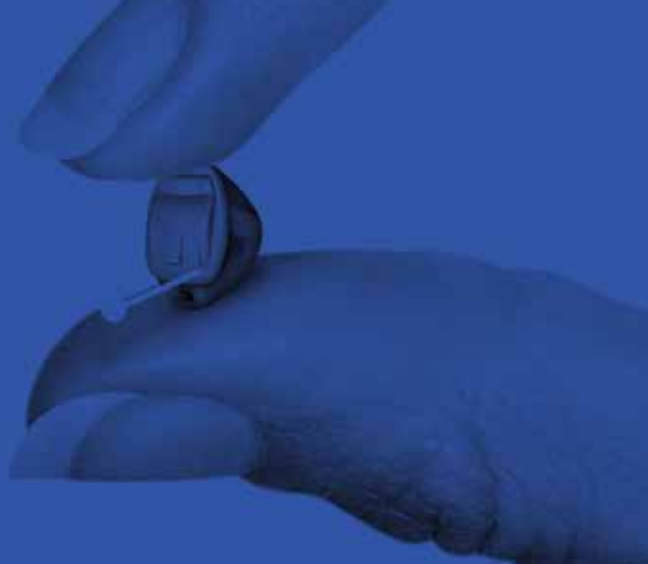
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