

HEAR HEAR

M A G A Z I N E

Community Matters

FALL
2023



Hear Entendre
Québec

Table of Contents

A Word from the Executive Director	3
BTW	4
Community Highlights.....	6
New Technologies.....	8
Membership & Registration	10
Programs.....	11
Hearing Journey	14
FYI	16
Perspectives.....	18

Board Members

Dale Bonnycastle	President
Connor Quin	Treasurer
Ashley Mayoff	Secretary & Young Adult Director
Annette Perry	Director
Salvator Castellano	Director
Sudeep Mathew	Director
Emily Ranger-Lepage	Director
Heidy Wager	Executive Director

Emeritus

Doreen Cons	Alvin Goldman
-------------	---------------

Staff

Heidy Wager	Executive Director
Layne Turner	Program Manager
Alex R. Ehlers	Communications/ Graphic Designer
Chandravathana	Administrative Assistant
Ilanthirayan	Assistant
Krystal Mark	Accessibility Coordinator
Melanie Hughe	Facilitator

Canada SummerJobs

Tatiana Povoroznyuk	Google Archivist
Kelsey Brennan	Graphic Designer

In Loving Memory Of

Dr. William Novick, Roslyn Muer- Chip Treasurer

In loving memory, we cherish the lives of those who have left us.

If we have inadvertently omitted your loved one's name, kindly let us know so that we may include their names in the next tribute.

We deeply appreciate your understanding and support as we remember our members.

HEAR QUÉBEC

7000 Sherbrooke St. West,
 Montréal, Québec, H4B 1R3
 Fax: (514) 489-3477 attn: Hear Québec
 Office: (514) 488-5552 ext. 4500
 Cell: (514) 797-2447
www.hearhear.org
 ISSN: 2370-7089

Follow us on



SOCIAL MEDIA

Our Community Beehive



A Word from the Executive Director

Within the “Community Beehive,” various initiatives buzz with activity, all aimed at improving the community’s well-being and addressing its needs. Just as bees work together to produce honey, community members come together to pool their efforts, knowledge, and skills to create positive outcomes for everyone.

This work has been immensely rewarding. I have spent my 35-year career dedicated to building and developing sustainable positive change, particularly through the collaboration of nonprofits and partners in the community. In this edition, we will not only showcase the ways our efforts are influencing communities but also highlight the inspiring endeavors of other individuals, organizations, and businesses striving to bring about social change.

This edition of *HEARHEAR Magazine* will delve into the concept of a **community health worker** and how we are applying it in the development of our new **Include-ME** program. This program will be centered around training **Accessibility Ambassadors**, who will collaborate with community partners to enhance accessibility for individuals impacted by hearing loss. This is a perfect example of partnering for change, as we will be partnering with **Layton Letherbridge Mackay, Senior Residences** and the **City of Montreal**. This has been made possible by **Centraide** funding.

Just like a beehive, a community is made up of

diverse individuals and organizations working together towards a common purpose. One of our community partners has prepared an article introducing the concept of **social prescription**, exploring the use of non-medical interventions to improve individuals’ overall well-being. Additionally, this edition includes two other articles which highlight the potential of technology in facilitating community engagement and fostering a positive impact.

Like bees, who support the growth of plants and flowers, a dynamic and engaged community can lead to the growth and flourishing of its members. *This year, our staff learned from a member about a cost-saving opportunity available to people with hearing loss. We gathered all the pertinent information and have consolidated it for you, making it easy to potentially save up to \$200 a year (See page 7).* **By supporting each other and working together, the “Community Beehive” becomes a place of empowerment, social connection, and positive change.**

This year we will be working hard on growing our community through our partners and continuing to enrich our membership. “Our Community Beehive” embodies the spirit of collaboration, inclusivity, and shared responsibility. It highlights the significance of working together like a well-coordinated hive to create a sustainable and positive impact for all its members.

“Our Community Beehive”
embodies the spirit of
collaboration, inclusivity, and
shared responsibility

Community Health Workers

Foster Accessibility



Angie Cho is an undergraduate student at McGill University majoring in physiology, with an interest in clinical research. Committed to accessibility and inclusion, Angie is a volunteer at Hear Quebec, primarily assisting with research towards the Include-**ME** project. She hopes to learn more about hearing health.

Currently, with such a vast healthcare system, a growing number of patients are not receiving the personalized support they require. One of the solutions to this growing issue is the implementation of Community Health Workers (CHWs). CHW is a broad term which describes a person who shares similar traits and/or lived experiences with patients accessing care in their community. These similarities allow CHWs to connect with patients on a personal level, allowing them to address health concerns which otherwise may be overlooked. CHWs act as liaisons between marginalized populations and healthcare professionals. One prime example involves Indigenous CHWs in Ecuador, who became known for their primary care delivery and educational support during the COVID-19 pandemic (Fiallos et al., 2020). CHWs are crucial frontline health workers responsible for reducing the healthcare access gap for marginalized groups, addressing the needs of specific communities.

CHWs can be of great help in the context of hearing health. Recently, Johns Hopkins University launched the Hearing Health Equity through Accessible

Research and Solutions (HEARS) program. This program enlisted CHWs in providing low-cost amplification devices and over-the-counter hearing aids. This initiative allows CHWs - individuals who share the lived experience with hearing loss - to educate users on the devices and troubleshoot issues they may be experiencing. HEARS is considered to be a pilot clinical trial in assessing the impact of CHWs on hearing care.

As part of their results, this study concludes that “CHW-delivered hearing care intervention significantly improved physical health-related quality of life” (Nieman et al., 2022). This research is crucial considering that there is such limited insight on the work being done by CHWs in North America. The HEARS program exemplifies how barriers can be broken down in patient communication, which is crucial to the hearing loss community.

Here at Hear Quebec, we have noticed that while hearing devices and other assistive listening devices (ALDs) are constantly being updated. People with hearing loss are having trouble keeping up with these new technologies. For these

Community Health Workers is a broad term which describes a person who shares similar traits and/or lived experiences with patients accessing care in their community



reasons, Hear Quebec is launching a new initiative, the **Include-ME** program. With this service we will train Accessibility Ambassadors (AAs), all of whom will be individuals with lived experience of hearing loss and using ALDs themselves. The AAs will help people with hearing loss understand more about their ALDs and address any issues they have with incorporating these devices into their lives. An example of these services would be linking their devices to TVs and sound systems, so they can better access media. With our AAs, there will be personalized support for individuals to help them get adjusted to their devices and use them to their full potential. They will also perform follow-ups to check in with every individual on the use of their device(s), and possibly address any further concerns. This checkup is vital, as it serves to assess whether people are adapting to their device and address any stigma the individual feels as they go through this process. One of the major, yet unspoken, barriers revolving around hearing devices is the acceptance of the device itself and being comfortable in using it. AAs will be uniquely well suited to address these issues, as they would have often experienced this stigma themselves. With this in mind, this program will allow us to offer assistance to those struggling with their hearing devices.

In summary with this service, we hope to alleviate some of the problems that complicate the lives of those with hearing loss through a personalized and compassionate approach.

CALL TO ACTION

Do you appreciate and understand how technology such as assistive listening devices can help a person with hearing loss communicate and cope better? Do you want to learn more about technology in order to support others? We are currently recruiting Accessibility Ambassadors to begin training this fall for the launch of the **Include-ME** program in October this year. Join us for the **information session** in our **office or online** on **September 21st**, from **2:00 - 3:00 PM** to learn more.

References

Fiallos, K., Morales, J., Cornejo, L. M., Beukeboom, C., & Doucet, A. (2020, November 6). Indigenous Community Health Workers Rise to the COVID-19 Era. *Global Health Programs*. https://www.mcgill.ca/globalhealth/files/globalhealth/katherine_fiallos.pdf

Nieman, C. L., Betz, J., Garcia Morales, E. E., Suen, J. J., Trumbo, J., Marrone, N., Han, H.-R., Szanton, S. L., & Lin, F. R. (2022). Effect of a community health worker-delivered personal sound amplification device on self-perceived communication function in older adults with hearing loss. *JAMA*, 328(23), 2324. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2022.21820>



Community Highlights

Celebrating an Accessible Future for All!

At Hear Quebec, we firmly believe in the power of community and the incredible impact of collaboration. That's why we are thrilled to present our newest column in the magazine, "Community Highlights," dedicated to showcasing the remarkable efforts of businesses, partners, and organizations in our community towards building a more accessible future for everyone.

Hearing Hear'os

Every year we take the time to recognize our partners through the Hearing Hear'os award. This award is presented to an organization, company, or community leader to acknowledge their outstanding collaboration with Hear Quebec, and the impact they have in helping us achieve our mission and vision. It may also be given to those who have had an impact on the hearing health community. This year's winner is Beaconsfield city councilor **Dominique Godin**. She advocated to get closed captions during city council meetings, thereby increasing accessibility for the Beaconsfield community.

We firmly believe that these inspiring stories have the power to ignite action and spark change.

By sharing the achievements of businesses, organizations, and people in our community, we hope to inspire others to take their own steps towards creating a more inclusive and accessible future.

If you would like to partner for change with us as part of our Include ME program, reach us today!

This has been an amazing year of working with new community partners to bring accessibility to people with hearing loss. As our **Include-ME** community consultations continue to pick up speed

we want to acknowledge the organizations who have promoted accessibility.

Westmount Public Library wanted to ensure their book club members had accessibility during the book club meetings. We gave them a demonstration of the Rogers Phonak Digital Modulation system, and they have since invested in this wonderful technology. Congratulations Westmount Library!

Overture with the Arts partnered with us to offer accessibility during their annual fundraising gala through closed captions and the FM system. This was their first event as organizational recipients of the Dale Bonnycastle bursary and guests were thrilled by the accessibility measures. Congratulations Overture with the Arts!

We are so honored to be partners and working with **OFF JFL/ZOOFEST** this year on our Access Comedy **Include-ME** tour. Not only did we co-produce a show this summer, but they have offered to continue to support us through our tour with our next stop at Maison de la culture Janine Sutto, which is made possible thanks to the support of the City of Montreal's Service de la diversité et de l'inclusion sociale, the Maisons de la culture network, and Maison de la culture Janine-



Apartment community for 55+ (autonomes living)

Tél. : 514 481-9609 • Fax : 514 481-0350
info@spsquare.ca

www.spsquare.ca

Sutto. You can also look forward to a surprise stop on World Hearing Day. Stay tuned for more info!

Once again this year we joined forces with Repercussion Theatre and brought accessibility with our FM systems to Shakespeare in the Park. Our members and the TranXition group from Layton Lethbridge Mackay



enjoyed priority seating for our speech readers, and everyone enjoyed a fabulous show that was captioned using the Plank App in both English and French.

If you would like to partner for change with us as part of our Include-**ME** program, reach out to us today!

Hear Quebec Wants to \$ave You Money!



Krystal Mark is the new Accessibility Coordinator for Hear Quebec. Originally from Vancouver, British Columbia, she has a background in social work, counseling, and administration. Krystal is an advocate for inclusivity and accessibility, having worked with individuals living with disabilities, seniors, and vulnerable populations. In her free time Krystal enjoys exploring Quebec's beautiful nature, discovering farmers markets and vintage stores, or enjoying the cinema.

My team and I are excited to share our most recent research findings with you, where we have learned that individuals with hearing loss are eligible to receive a sizable discount on their cell phone plan. This includes major telecom companies such as Bell, Rogers, and Videotron. These discounts can assist you in savings while we are facing the current high cost of living. We suggest that you reach out to your provider to confirm offers and eligibility requirements. Hear Quebec is now offering our registered members exclusive eligibility to receive a Letter of Membership Certification to submit to their telephone provider to receive this discount.

The benefits of becoming a member are endless! You will receive exclusive access to discounts, news, promotions, and events prior to public release. Memberships and donations also help support more accessible events and activities within the community.



I can assure you that your donations are being used towards building and supporting a community that is more accessible for all. Membership advantages also include the right to vote in our Annual General Meeting, a printed copy of our bi-annual **HEARHEAR** magazine, and eligibility to participate in our programs and services. As we slowly re-emerge from the times of the pandemic, we are eager to revamp and restart our accessible community programs, services, and events.

To become a member you can access our online or printable form via our website at www.hearhear.org or by stopping by our Sherbrooke office for further information. We would love to hear from you!



Manoir Westmount

A project of the Rotary Club of Westmount

Very affordable all inclusive rates...



- 3 meals a day
- Daily housekeeping
- Laundry service
- Health care personnel on duty 24-hour
- Extensive Leisure Program
- 24-hour security

Manoir Westmount Inc.
4646 Sherbrooke St. W
Westmount, QC H3Z 2Z8

For an appointment to view, please call

514.937.3943

www.manoirwestmount.ca

My Way into Community



Alex Reveles Ehlers is the Coordinator of Communications at Hear Quebec. She graduated from John Abbott College as a graphic and web designer, and has a background in photography. She is an animal and nature lover who spends her days between books, Meetup events, and Hear Quebec.

It's 2023 and you find yourself alone at home on a Friday afternoon because for whatever reason you ended up flying solo. Maybe it's because you are newly single, you have a condition that makes you avoid bars, or maybe it's just that the weather is giving you a hard time. Regardless, the scenario is clear: you are home ALONE, with no plans for later that night and no plans for the weekend. Sounds like I've been spying on you? Not necessarily.

That was my scenario for the past two months. I had a life changing event that left me with an empty apartment and nothing but my loneliness, fears, and sadness holding my hand. Everything changed when a lightning bolt of rage came over me on one of my lonely nights. The fighter inside of me awakened, saying: "This is 2023, there's technology for God's sake!" At first the loneliness responded, "Should we get an app to meet new people?" Before I could take a breath, sadness entered the conversation and said "I am not sure, I'm not feeling like meeting people. What if they don't like me? I'm not ready to get to know anyone yet. I'll have to explain myself, tell my story which is still painful and makes me cry even when I think about it. I don't want to pretend that I am fine online while behind my phone my tears splash the screen."

The situation was about to get difficult. I felt a lump in my throat. I couldn't breathe. There were tears in

my eyes but some pride within me kept them from rolling down my cheeks. My once rebellious soul resurfaced and looked me in the eyes. Memories flooded my heart. I started thinking, "I used to sing, I used to paint. I wasn't good but I liked it. I used to like reading and talking to people about



There were tears in my eyes but some pride within me kept them from rolling down my cheeks. My once rebellious soul resurfaced and looked me in the eyes. Memories flooded my heart



those books." At that moment, I knew! I owed it to the rebellious soul in the mirror. I had to do something to stop this emptiness from consuming me. I had the urge to do something different.

This wasn't only about meeting new people. This was about me remembering who I was before everything fell apart. This moment was about me getting to know myself in this new life that was coming together before my eyes. Maybe even beyond knowing myself, I realized I had an opportunity in my hands to create a new ME.

I recalled that a friend of mine had mentioned an app he used for coding meet-ups on Saturdays. Maybe an app could help after all – I went directly to the App Store and typed in "Meet Up". I wasn't sure if there were two words or just one, but "who cares," I thought. "This is supposed to be a smart phone, right?" I hit "enter," and the holy grail lit up on my screen. This cheesy logo in magenta tones, along with a two line slogan that read: "Meetup: Social Events & Groups." I didn't hesitate. I immediately pressed "Get," downloaded the app, opened it, created an account with my email, my name... the

usual. Now my anxiety made an appearance.

There I was, in front of a screen, asking what my interests were. I had no idea! “Thank God there are options,” I said, staring at the bubbles that popped up on my screen. “Arts & culture, career & business, dancing, community & environment.” I selected pretty much all of them. Then, it asked me to narrow it down. “Live Music” came up right away. “Digital Photography, Poetry, Writer’s Block”... I kept selecting everything that rang a bell in my head of things I used to like. I hit “Next.” “Find a group” the screen said, and listed options: “Montreal Drawing together,” “Novice Games Club,” “Photography Lovers.”

As I continued to scroll, many more groups kept showing on my screen. Again, I hit “Next,” and the message showed: “Find your first event.” I selected “Explore,” then pressed “Today” and boom! Random and cheesy names for different events started to appear on the screen. In between so many, one caught my eye: “Randonnee sur le Mont Royal-Hiking on Mont Royal. 6:30PM.” I read the description, and said to myself “It’s free. I guess I could go.” I looked at the clock, and realized it was already 6:00PM. I selected the event and at the bottom this red button pops-up instantly: “Join and

RSVP.” I didn’t think too much. I pressed it and a message showed: “You’re going.”

The familiar anxiety started to approach but this time she came with a sparkle of excitement. “I like to walk,” I said out loud. “The trees are fully green. Should I bring my camera?... No time, gotta go! Where are my running shoes?” I opened the closet only to realize, “I don’t have running shoes!” My eyes met the hiking boots I bought a year ago. “These could do the job” I thought. I washed my face, put on some deodorant and found my leggings matching my “John Abbott College” t-shirt.

“Ok, I can make it.” At 6:10 pm, I was running out of my apartment. I didn’t even have time to think if I was bringing my water bottle, my camera, my anxiety, or my fears with me. When I arrived at the meeting point, I realized there were no fears. The sadness, loneliness, and anxiety stayed home. It was only ME there. Suddenly, a friendly “Bonjour, hi” pulled me out of my head,

The sadness, loneliness, and anxiety stayed home. It was only ME there. Suddenly, a friendly “Bonjour, hi” pulled me out of my head, drawing a smile across my face.

Use your phone to scan this QR Code & visit: [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com)



Renew Your Membership & Amplify Our Impact

As a treasured member of Hear Quebec, you have been a source of inspiration and support for individuals with hearing loss. Your dedication has empowered us to create meaningful change and transform lives. We invite you to renew your membership and continue making a lasting difference in the lives of those affected by hearing loss.

New Memberships are valid between April 1 and March 31 of each year and must be renewed annually. Please complete **both sides** of the 2023-24 membership form if you are a **new member**.

Renewal Membership Forms are available for the 2023-2024 membership year. Past members will receive a simplified membership form in the mail. For the renewal to be successfully processed, the form must still be completed, signed, and returned to Hear Quebec with payment.

Over the years together, we have achieved remarkable milestones along the journey to support people with hearing loss, from providing different methods of hearing accessibility to peer-to-peer support. Your membership connects you with like-minded members and professionals who share a common goal of fostering a more accessible and understanding society. By renewing your membership, you actively participate in creating a community that embraces diversity and provides inclusive environments.

Furthermore, renewing your membership will ensure that you continue to receive exclusive information and resources from us. This time our membership tip may help you save nearly \$200 annually on your cell phone bills. To find out more please read the **Community Highlight** section (page 7). In addition, all of our members will receive 3 broken ear stickers free of charge. These stickers may be claimed in the office or

during one of our activities.

This is a great tool that can be placed on the back of your driver license or medical card.

Registration is mandatory for all activities, events, and services.

If there are not enough registered members or interest for a specific activity, it may be postponed or cancelled. Please register prior to your activity and not on the day that it starts. Indicate your interest on the registration forms and complete the process with your payment, if any. Only members who complete their registration will have their seat reserved. Spots will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis.

You can also download these forms on our website and submit them through email: www.hearhear.org/become-a-member/. For more information about membership and registration, please contact info@hearhear.org or call the office at 514-488-5552 ext 4500. **As a member, your voice carries weight in shaping our initiatives. Kindly renew your membership to amplify our impact in empowering individuals with hearing loss to thrive in their community.**

Payment Methods:

- You can conveniently make secure payments online at <https://hearhear.nationbuilder.com/donate>. Please use the comment section to express what the payment is for, ie. "membership fee \$15," "donation \$25."
- You may also pay in-person at our office using **cash, cheque, credit card, or debit card**
- If you choose to send your payments by mail, please make cheques payable to **Hear Québec**.



Programs

AWARENESS AND ACCESSIBILITY

THE INCLUDE-ME PROGRAM LAUNCHES A *New* SERVICES THIS FALL!

Accessibility Ambassadors (AA) program provides peer based support for your accessibility needs in your own home. This service offers personalized, home-based, support to those with hearing loss. In partnership with Layton Lethbridge Mackay, the AA will ensure that people are using their Hearing Assistive Technology to its full potential in order to thrive! This program is funded by the government of Canada's Community Services Recovery Fund. If you are interested in this service, please mark the **Accessibility Ambassador** box on your registration form.



We are currently recruiting volunteer Accessibility Ambassadors!

Do you have a hearing loss and appreciate how technology can improve quality of life?

Would you like to help people and give back to your community?

You will be provided with all the training and support necessary. For more information, please register for the upcoming information session **How to Become an Accessibility Ambassador** presented by Krystal Mark & Layne Turner.

Mode

In-Person

Date and Time

September 21st, 2023
2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Place

7010 Sherbrooke West,
Room: C233



Include-ME Community Consultations

Unlocking Inclusivity: Let Hear Quebec Lead the Way! Are you part of an organization interested in opening your doors to those with hearing loss, but you want to make sure you get it right? Whatever the scale of your project or event, join the movement of inclusivity by partnering with Hear Quebec. Our expert and resourceful consultations will guide you and your team step-by-step towards offering appropriate hearing-loss accessibility. To learn more and get started, please contact info@hearhear.org.



Special Events

The Include-ME Tour

November 24, 2023 7:30 PM

Place: Maison de la culture Janine Sutto, 2550 Ontario St East

Access Comedy "The Include-ME Tour"
French Language Edition: Featuring Quebec's incredible francophone talent, this fully accessible show is free and in partnership with the city of Montreal..

Holiday Event

December 2nd 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m

Place: Dorval, TBD.

Carpooling will be available.

Save the Date

World Hearing Day

Stay tuned for more info about a special Access Comedy show as part of the Include-ME tour in celebration of World Hearing Day this March.

SUPPORT

Peer Mentoring Our trained peer mentors are here to help you in adapting to your hearing loss and new reality. Contact us to learn more about being paired with a mentor.



Daytime Coffee Breaks return this fall and winter on Wednesdays, now 30 minutes longer as requested by you! This space is for people to share their experiences with hearing loss. Melanie will once again be facilitating this activity.

FALL DATES

Mode: Virtual/Daytime
Time & Dates: 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Wednesdays
September 20th to December 6th

WINTER DATES

Mode: Virtual/Daytime
Time & Dates: 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Wednesdays
January 17th to March 27th

The Exceptional Lunch League: Join us for a delicious lunch and the chance to connect with others. Jill Johnson will be our special guest host for these two sessions, leading a variety of fun and interactive games and activities. Carpooling will be available.



Mode: In-person
Time & Dates: 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. October 12th, 2023
Place: Room S015, Sarto Desnoyers, 1335 Lake shore Drive, Dorval

Mode: In-person
Time & Dates: 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. November 9th, 2023
Place: Room S015, Sarto Desnoyers, 1335 Lake shore Drive, Dorval

New Thorns & Roses a group for people with cochlear implants. Cochlear implants can be life changing, but can come with challenges! This group brings together folks to share their struggles and victories as they progress with adapting to cochlear implants and learning to hear again. Participants will receive optional access to LACE Auditory Training software, which is only offered for those who have completed their rehabilitation sessions and would like to further improve their listening skills.



FALL DATES

Mode: Virtual/Evening
Time & Dates: 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. September 26th
October 24th
November 21st
December 19th

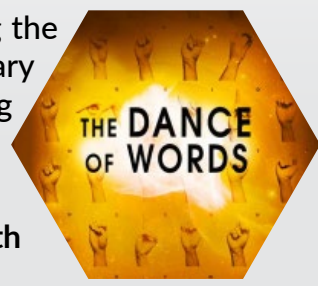
WINTER DATES

Mode: Virtual/Evening
Time & Dates: 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. January 23rd
February 20th
March 19th

Cocktail Evenings are fun and relaxing events that feature guest speakers, documentaries, book discussions, or other activities that give you the opportunity to learn new things and meet like-minded people.

Fall Dates

♦ **Documentary.** In honor of International Week of the Deaf we will be screening the National Film Board of Canada documentary **The Dance of Words**. This documentary features young emerging artists who have embraced their Deaf identity, using their art to advance and promote deaf culture in their communities. LSQ, Dubbed in English with subtitles in English.



Mode Virtual /Evening **Time** 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. **Date** September 28th

- ◇ **Fine Arts Museum.** Let's go to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts! Join us for a guided group tour of the upcoming exhibition *Marisol: A Retrospective*. FM systems will be available. An ASL interpreter will be present if requested before **October 1st 2023**.

Carpooling will be available.

Mode:	In-person	Dates:	October 25th
Time &	5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Place:	1380 Sherbrooke St W.

Winter Dates

- ◇ **Book Club Discussion with Dale Bonnycastle: "Life After Deaf"** By Monique Williamson. 152 pages. This is a true story of a woman whose life began to unravel after she suddenly went deaf due to a mystery illness. Throughout the book, the reader learns of her courageous battle to learn to live with profound deafness. We have five copies of the book available to borrow for two weeks at a time.

Mode:	Virtual/Evening	Mode:	Virtual/Evening
Time &	7:00 p.m - 8:00 p.m.	Time &	7:00 p.m - 8:00 p.m.
Dates:	February 26th	Dates:	March 8th

RESOURCES AND REFERRALS

Referral Service: Hear Quebec is known in the community for providing relevant hearing health information. Thanks to our strong partnerships and knowledgeable staff, we can help you navigate the hearing health pathway at every stage. Whether you are seeking information for yourself or someone you care about, contact us today with your questions!



HEARTalks seminars bring you information on hearing loss. *New* this year are several evening sessions to make these accessible to people who work or study.

Fall Dates

- ◇ **The Montreal Cochlear Implant Program** Find out how the Cochlear Implant program is progressing in Montreal with special guest speaker Dr. Tamara Mijovic. Whether you have already received yours, are on the waiting list, or just want to find out more about the program and what it entails, join us for an informative session to learn more.

Mode Virtual/Daytime **Time** 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. **Date** October 17th

- ◇ **Living Well At Any Age** Specialists from Concordia's Perform Center will join us to talk about physical activity, nutrition, and aging, and what you can do to live your best life.

Mode Hybrid (in person or online)/Daytime **Place** C233 7010 Sherbrooke Street West **Time** 2:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.
Date November 2nd



Winter Dates

- ◇ **Am I Eligible for Tax Rebates?** Join us for an information session with a representative from the Canadian Revenue Agency to discuss the tax rebate programs available to people with hearing loss. Whether you are a senior, of working age, or a student there may be programs that apply to you for your hearing loss or other disabilities.

Mode Virtual/Evening **Time** 7:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m. **Date** February 1st



Finding My “Right to Hear”



Kit Racette was born in England, and moved to Canada at the age of ten, discovering her hearing loss then. Today, Kit enjoys retirement while residing in Lanaudiere, spending most of her time in the garden, on the lake, or volunteering at a local market. In the winter, she escapes the cold by visiting family in Australia.

I have had the pleasure of getting involved in the activities of Hear Quebec over the past year. My participation in the Peer Mentor training program and the Book Club have often brought me “AHA!” moments, leading to many excited emails to Hear Quebec expressing my gratitude. I hope you will read my Hearing Journey, and understand why my participation in this organization has been so beneficial.

As a child, I experienced unilateral hearing loss. My parents gradually became aware of my choice to sit on the left side of a room and my inability to hear what was said by people to my left. On my thirteenth birthday, I was taken to an ear, nose and throat doctor in Toronto – I remember going! He diagnosed me with complete loss of hearing in my left ear due to the loss of a nerve, caused by a secondary virus as a result of measles. Because I had no nerve, hearing aids would not help. I had measles when I was eight, so at thirteen I had dealt with unilateral hearing for five years. I continued to sit on the left, and turned my head so that my right ear faced the source of sound. Over time the turning of my head resulted in scoliosis of my spine and joint issues. In a

funny way I am grateful for this, as I have studied movement modules to mitigate these issues, benefitting my entire body!

Due to the lack of hearing, I learned that I had no proprioception on my left side. Proprioception means the body’s sense of space. For me, my left side did not exist! Fast forward to age fifty-seven – I was encountering difficulties processing numbers over the phone, so I went to see an audiologist. She confirmed that my left ear did not detect sound, but also that my right ear was losing hearing, and

Due to the lack of hearing, I learned that I had no proprioception on my left side. Proprioception means the body’s sense of space. For me, my left side did not exist!

fitted me with a hearing aid. I was relieved that the problem was my hearing and not my cognition! Six years later, an audiologist recommended that I purchase a BiCROS system. This consists of a hearing aid called a CROS (Contralateral Routing of Signals) in the deaf ear acting as a microphone, sending sound to the regular hearing aid in the better ear. Although I cannot hear in my left ear, all the sounds around me are picked up in my right ear. At first, my poor brain had no idea how to deal with this new blended sound. However, over time my left side came back! While it is still a habit to turn my head, I am working on looking people in their eyes when we talk. I am so grateful to the advances in hearing



aids, and to the audiologists who make all of this available to me.

So, why am I such a fan of participating in Hear Quebec activities? First of all, I have met people who have also had to deal with deafness. Hearing deficiency is a hidden handicap and a taboo subject. We live in a hearing world with very little allowances for those who do not hear well. I admire and learn from you. I feel as if for the first time I have found a community in which I fit! I remember peers in one of my groups talking about the "right to hear." This had never occurred to me; it was up



to me to hear. Since that day, I have been open about my hearing challenge. I ask people to speak slowly and remove their hands from their face so I can lip-read. From the Peer Mentor program, I have learnt about new and exciting tools. I now use an app on my phone called "Group Transcriptions," which transcribes meetings for me in both languages – I love it! But more than anything, I am excited that I have learnt to advocate for myself. All my life, I hid behind my deafness. Socializing was always difficult, especially in groups. Classes were often impossible if the teacher did not speak well. I did not know I could ask for help. So here I am, at seventy-seven, wishing I had known all this years ago. Sending you all gratitude for your part in me learning to advocate for myself!

So, why am I such a fan of participating in Hear Quebec activities? First of all, I have met people who have also had to deal with deafness



Sylvie Auger M.O.A.

Audiologist, Clinical Director & Owner

2111 Northcliffe, suite 443, Montreal, Qc, H4A 3K6

Tel: (514) 488-5558 | Fax: (514) 488-2462

info@audiologie-centre-ouest.com | www.audiologie-centre-west.com

Hearing Aids Finding the Perfect Fit



Layne Turner has been the program manager at Hear Quebec for over a year. She is passionate about staying active and being a great mom. Layne's mission is to stay engaged with our members about what matters to them.

The best hearing aids are the ones that you wear happily everyday, reaping the benefits that this technology provides, such as improved cognitive health, better communication, and increased quality of life. That said, choosing the right hearing aids can seem daunting, even if opting for those covered by RAMQ. I know that our community consists of savvy consumers who like to do their research and try out hearing aids before they commit. I recently learned about Soundly.com, a website that researches and tests hearing aids, allowing you to compare products. I reached out to Blake Cadwell, one of the co-founders of the website to gain his perspective on choosing the right hearing aids and to learn more about his motivations for the work he does.

Can you tell us a bit about your "Hearing Journey?"

I have hereditary hearing loss, shared by my mom and brother. My mom got hearing aids when I was in middle school, and my brother got hearing aids when he was in middle school. I knew I would get hearing aids at some point, but I wasn't ready.

For years, I asked friends to repeat themselves and got very good at reading lips.

When everyone around me put on masks in 2020, I lost my ability to lip-read. I knew I had to do something, and like so many people, I opened my laptop and started researching. What I found was incredibly confusing. It took me 10-15 hours to figure out which steps I should take first.

I felt there needed to be an easier way to research

my options, test my hearing, and get started. That experience became the spark for Soundly.com.

What motivated you to start this website?

Hearing health impacts over 40 million people in the U.S., but the topic gets surprisingly little attention. As someone with hearing loss, I felt like a site like Soundly could make the experience more welcoming.

Can you describe your testing methods?

Our lead audiologist, Dr. Amy Sarow, and I have collectively tested 50+ products, from cheap amplifiers to the most premium products on the market.

I often spend weeks or months testing hearing aids before I review them. My goal is to find out how each pair manages background noise in my daily life. I also test all the extra things like app features, streaming, and phone calls.

Soundly also has state-of-the-art equipment that we use to test products objectively. We use a recording device from Ahead Simulations to gather real sound samples for the site. We also use a Verifit audiological test box to measure noise reduction and amplification during our reviews.

Our goal is to go deep with the products we review but ultimately share digestible and relatable content.

What questions should I ask my Hearing Aid provider



before we discuss my options?

Getting smart before your first appointment is a big confidence boost. We recently published a 60-minute beginners guide (www.soundly.com/blog/beginners-guide) that covers everything you need to feel informed before you head in for an appointment.

What information should I make sure I have before I leave with my new hearing aids?

Getting a new pair of hearing aids is exciting, but it also takes some setup. Here are a few things to think about:

Adjustment

I suggest new wearers get their provider's tips on the hearing aid adjustment period. We recently published a piece on this topic on our website (www.soundly.com/blog/getting-used-to-hearing-aids).

Follow-up communication

Make sure you schedule your follow-up appointment before you leave the office to prevent wait times. Those first follow-ups are crucial to a successful long-term outcome.

Apps and steaming

It's easy to wave off help with app setup and Bluetooth connection. My advice? Just do it. Hearing aids are more complex than headphones or TVs, and it's worth getting everything fine-tuned with the professional in

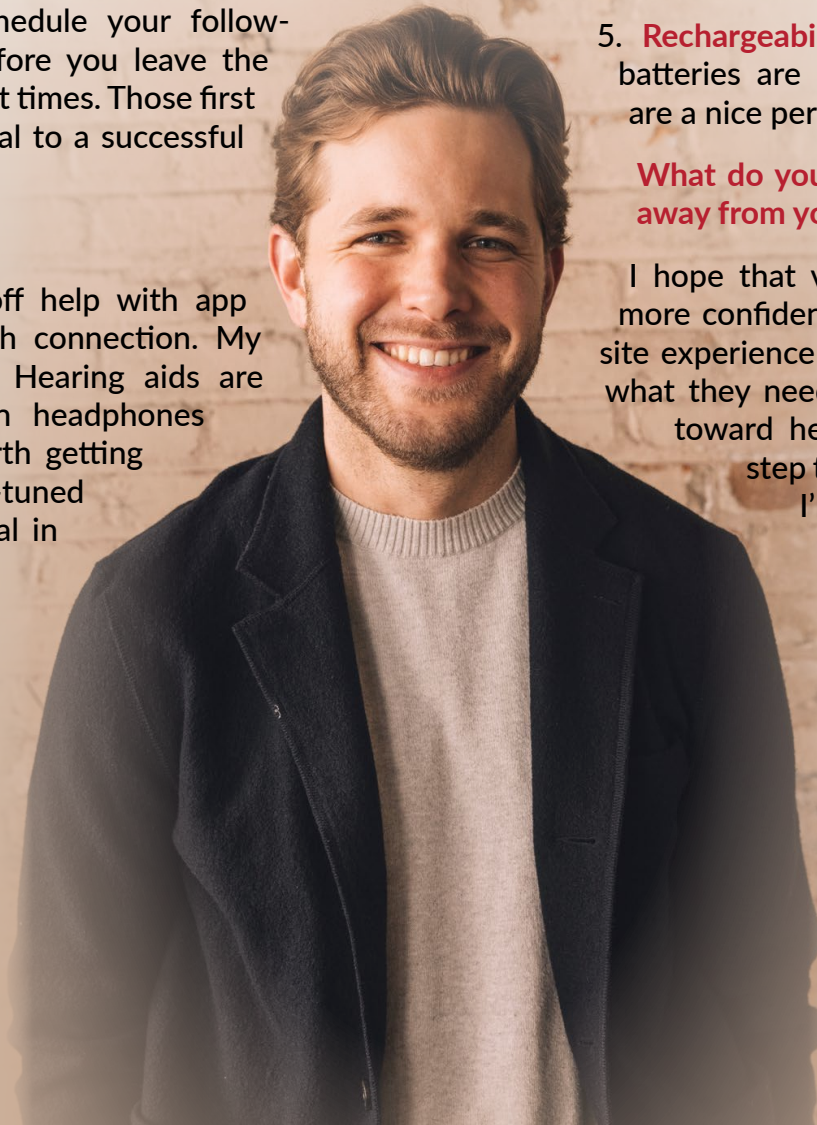
the room. Bluetooth connection issues are some of the most common frustrations among our readers.

Do you have a top 5 list of must-haves when shopping for hearing aid?

1. **Customization** - Your hearing aid should be customized to match your one-of-one hearing loss. I've tried PSAPS and presets and they never work well.
2. **Comfort**- Comfort is big for me. I prefer RIC-style devices because I can wear them for a full day without ear fatigue.
3. **Remote adjustments**- Most leading manufacturers now have this option, which is a must. I love texting my hearing provider and opening the app to find new settings ready to download.
4. **Bluetooth streaming** - I regularly take phone calls throughout the day. The option to pick up and talk without reaching for my AirPods is essential.
5. **Rechargeability** - Rechargeable batteries are not essential, but they are a nice perk.

What do you hope people will take away from your website?

I hope that visitors of Soundly feel more confident. Our hope is that the site experience and content give them what they need to take the first step toward hearing better. That first step took me a long time, and I'm glad I finally made it.



An Introduction to Social Prescription



Paola Leal holds a masters degree in biomedical sciences, specializing in psychiatry. She currently works in both social and research sectors to promote change in culture and the health care system. Most notably, Paola works at the Eva Marsden Center as the project manager of their new community-based initiative: the social prescription project.

You may have already caught wind of this term: social prescription. After all it is a concept that has gained in popularity the past few years – across the world even. If you haven't heard of it, allow me to be your tour guide for this ride.

Social prescription (SP) has been around since the 1990s in the United Kingdom. It was ideated as a means to address the issues of loneliness and social isolation pervading in the senior population. A part of the answer was to involve General Practitioners (GPs) into the project and have them create “prescriptions” referring seniors towards activities in the community. As such, a system involving the collaboration between GPs and community organizations was created. The success of these initiatives led to the adoption of the social prescription model into the NHS (Nation Health System) around 2014. As of 2019, the NHS plans to incorporate social prescribing into its comprehensive model of personalized care. Although it began as a project to combat social isolation, social prescription has evolved to cater to whatever social needs a community wants to address, even considering their cultural context. Needless to say, this creates the conundrum of trying to define a concept that looks differently depending on the country – even depending on the province in our case!

Social prescription (SP) has been around since the 1990s in the United Kingdom. It was ideated as a means to address the issues of loneliness and social isolation pervading in the senior population

Thankfully, social prescription has a core set of values and ideas that defines it. These can be boiled down to mean that an individual in a clinical or community setting (the prescriber) can identify social determinants of health (non-medical needs that can impact your well-being and physical or mental health) and connect a person (the client) to services and support in the community. The “prescription” is thus a community referral that is co-constructed by both the prescriber and client. To guarantee that everything goes smoothly with this “prescription,” further support is given by a Link Worker who helps the client navigate the referral and ensures their well-being.

A typical SP model can thus look a bit like this:

A GP and an individual talk about a recent health issue that has cropped up in the individual's life. Through mutual trust, the individual tells their GP about their preoccupation surrounding a social determinant of health. Let's say they need help finding support regarding a housing issue – mold that has not been taken care of by the landlord. They are possibly in need of a legal recourse, but they don't know where to start or may not have



the financial means to do so. The GP could then prescribe them to consult with a community organization that offers this type of assistance.

Should the GP not have this type of information on hand, they could refer the individual to a Link Worker who would be aware of the services available. Regardless of the GP's knowledge on the subject, the individual will be supported by the Link Worker. The Link Worker can offer to accompany the individual to the community organization, check in on their well-being, provide further assistance as needs arise, and follow-up with them on the issue(s).

Now that we've cleared up the basics, why are we interested in this? Quebec has long had issues with connecting services or simply sharing information on the community services available to individuals.

The context of the pandemic has only highlighted the faults of our system: the overload of work, consultations, and waiting times in health services and the community sector.

In order to breach these gaps, The Eva Marsden Center for Social Justice and Aging started its own version of SP a few years ago, encouraging health professionals to address social determinants of health by working with local community organizations. Today, our Community-born SP project - Clic Social - collaborates

alongside a research team from McGill University, as well as the CIUSSS Centre-Ouest.

How our project grew into this, and how it will evolve, is a story for another time.

The Eva Marsden Center for Social Justice and Aging started its own version of SP a few years ago, encouraging health professionals to address social determinants of health by working with local community organizations.



“Hearing well changes everything!”

REDISCOVER THE PLEASURE OF HEARING



Free hearing screening

Offer valid until December 31st, 2023

Make an appointment: **1-888-368-3637**

The largest network of audioprosthethists in Quebec
www.groupeforget.com

GROUPE FORGET
AUDIOPROSTHETHISTS



**Centres
Masliah**
AUDIOPROTHÉSISTES

*Careful listening
since 1988*



**FREE
HEARING
SCREENING**

*Until December 31,
2023*

CÔTE-DES-NEIGES
ROSEMONT
MILE END
WESTMOUNT
ANGUS
CÔTE-SAINT-LUC

and **14** other centres in
the Montreal area

1-800-550-8554

**Never too young
to hear well**

centresmasliah.com

*An assessment by an audioprosthesis is required
to determine if the model shown suits the
patient's needs.*

Head office: 1 Westmount square #850, Montreal



AT THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

pooling
our strengths

**The Office offers its assistance to people
with disabilities and to their family and friends.**

The Office des personnes handicapées du Québec...

- **listens** and **helps** you identify your needs;
- **informs** you about existing resources programs and services;
- **advises** you about how to apply for services;
- **refers** you to the organization most likely to meet your needs;
- **supports** you in the steps you take.

For more information

Phone : 1-800-567-1465



TTY

1-800-567-1477

aide@ophq.gouv.qc.ca

Québec.ca/services-people-with-disabilities

