

HEAR HEAR

Celebrating 45 | Looking Back

MAGAZINE



FALL 2024

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In Loving Memory Of

We are deeply grateful for the generous donations made in memory of our esteemed board member, Barney Cons, who recently passed away. Thanks to the support from Barney's family, friends, and our members, we have raised \$1,561.



These funds will support the "Include Me at Home" program, ensuring more accessible homes through the training of our Accessibility Ambassadors.

Thank you for helping us honor Barney's legacy and for your commitment to creating a more inclusive community.

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.

45 Years of Hear Quebec: Celebrating Our Journey & Impact

As we embark on our anniversary year, we take a moment to reflect on our remarkable journey and the evolution of Hear Quebec. Since our inception, our mission has been to enhance the quality of life for individuals with hearing loss. This milestone allows us to celebrate the significant strides we've made and look forward to exciting new initiatives. Embracing the spirit of "nothing about us without us," we continue to champion the cause of making the most of the hearing we have and building a more inclusive future.

A Journey Through Time

In this issue of the magazine we will take a walk through time and look into the last 45 years of hearing health and how it has evolved and changed over time.

We have witnessed a profound transformation in hearing health technologies and services. From the early days of analog assistive devices to today's sophisticated digital solutions, the progress has been remarkable. Hear Quebec has been at the forefront of these advancements, with significant contributions from local experts and organizations that have shaped the landscape of hearing health in our community.

Highlighting Programs & Services

We are thrilled to highlight several programs and initiatives that reflect our commitment to inclusivity and support:

- **Include ME at Home and in Residence:** Enhancing accessibility with tailored peer-to-peer support to ensure full participation in living environments.
- **Consult ME:** We received another new grant. In partnership with the City of Montreal this new funding will support the work that we have been doing on these innovative projects addressing hearing health needs across Les Maisons de la Culture.

- **Expanded Peer-Centered Programming:** Growing our one-on-one peer mentoring and CI Peer-led Mentoring Group continuing to provide compassionate peer led support.

- **Speechreading Programs:** Bringing back these popular programs to help individuals improve communication skills and quality of life.

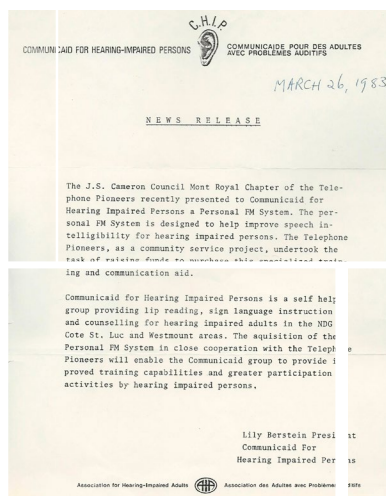
- **Save \$200 this year!** Contact us for details and stay informed.

We will be sharing some of our exciting activities for our special celebrations for our 45th anniversary. Don't miss out—subscribe today!

Looking Ahead

As we celebrate our dedication and progress, our commitment to advancing hearing health and fostering an inclusive community remains unwavering. We invite you to join us in this journey, as we continue to build on our rich legacy and look forward to the future with optimism and enthusiasm.

Thank you for being a vital part of our story. Together, let's embrace the next chapter of innovation and impact of Hear Quebec.





Paul Evers is a specialized educator with over 30 years of experience at the Lethbridge-Layton-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre. Throughout his career, he has been dedicated to supporting individuals with sensory, language, and motor impairments. Currently, Paul serves as a key member of the Adult 25+ Sensorial Program working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing clients.

Paul was recently honored by Hear Entendre Quebec with the 2023 Gardner Golden Ear Award. His expertise and commitment have significantly improved the quality of life for many individuals, and his collaborative work within a multidisciplinary team consistently achieves successful rehabilitation outcomes.

Beyond Basic ALDs: Exploring 45 Years of Hearing Tech

My journey into the world of hearing assistive technology began in 2001 at the Mackay Centre. I had the privilege of collaborating with local experts such as audiologists Dale Bonnycastle and Janet Mackay, as well as hearing aid specialist Ian Mark. Recently, they generously shared their experiences spanning back to the 1980s and beyond, enlightening me about many of the gradual yet significant advancements in technology and services and how these devices have impacted the lives of those with hearing loss.

The insights of these well-respected professionals, coupled with leveraging the power of AI, deepened my respect for the innovations that enhance communication and accessibility for those facing hearing challenges. Reflecting on 45 years of evolution from analog to digital systems in hearing assistive technology, I've come to appreciate how these advancements have transformed assistive listening devices into sleeker, more user-friendly solutions that aim to

integrate more seamlessly into everyday life.

From Phone Amplifiers to Bluetooth and Live Captions

In 1979, telephone use posed significant challenges for individuals with hearing loss. Amplified handsets attached to rotary or touch-tone phones were common solutions to enhance sound clarity, alongside Text Telephone (TTY) technology, which enabled text-based communication over phone lines.

Advancements in technology have since transformed early phone amplifiers into more sophisticated solutions. Bluetooth technology, introduced in the late 20th century, revolutionized wireless connectivity for hearing aids and devices, facilitating more seamless communication.

Moreover, the implementation of the Video Relay Service as well as integration of live captions on smartphones and other devices has further enhanced accessibility, providing real-time text display of spoken dialogue and gradually reducing reliance on traditional TTY systems.

“In the late 1970s and early 1980s, alerting systems relied on flashing lights to indicate events such as doorbells & phone calls



TV – Wired to Integrated

The evolution of TV listening devices since 1979 has been remarkable. Ian Mark recalls adapting televisions with direct wired solutions such as extension speakers and infrared setups to provide amplified sound. He also used loop systems, which direct wireless signals into hearing aids. These loops placed around chairs or rooms significantly improved the TV listening experience for these individuals. Recent years have seen the arrival of digital wireless technology. These innovations have further revolutionized the TV experience, enabling direct streaming to Bluetooth-enabled hearing aids and headphones.

From Classroom FM Systems to Everyday Applications

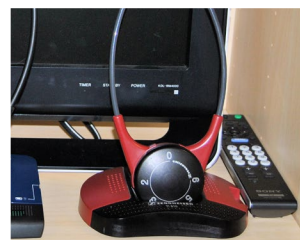
FM systems initially transformed communication in educational settings for individuals with hearing challenges. Beginning with FM transmission, these systems have advanced significantly through digital signal processing. This evolution has improved integration with smartphones and public address systems, delivering enhanced audio quality and accessibility.

Today, assistive listening technologies continue to evolve, extending their impact beyond classrooms to various everyday environments.

Alerting Systems: From Sound Detection to Wireless Integration and Smart Devices

Over time, advancements in sound detection technology improved these systems, allowing auditory signals to be converted into visual or tactile alerts. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, alerting systems relied on flashing lights to indicate events such as doorbells and phone calls. The integration of wireless technology marked a significant milestone for alerting systems in the early 2000s.

Today, alerting systems continue to evolve with sophisticated features, including integration with smartphones, hearing devices, and smart watches. For example, a smart watch could notify a user when someone is at the door, using visual or tactile alerts. These advancements enable greater mobility, adaptability, and accessibility for individuals with hearing loss.



Conclusion

From humble beginnings with analog devices to today's sophisticated digital solutions, the field has evolved to prioritize not only functionality but also integration and accessibility. The integration of accessibility features into everyday items marks a significant step forward, seamlessly blending assistive technology into daily routines.

Embracing these advancements can greatly improve quality of life. Whether you're exploring Bluetooth-enabled hearing aids or considering the benefits of live captions on your smartphone, being curious about new technologies can open doors to enhanced communication and accessibility. Remember, seeking guidance from professionals at Lethbridge-Layton-Mackay (LLMRC) or support from Hear Quebec can provide invaluable support in navigating these options. For those curious about the future of assistive technology, further exploration into upcoming advancements can be an exciting journey. Let's continue to embrace innovation and ensure that everyone, regardless of age or circumstance, can improve their hearing health and overall well-being through the latest advancements in assistive technology.



Liliane Brunetti graduated with her Masters in Audiology from the University of Western Ontario. She has been an audiologist at the Lethbridge-Layton-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre for over 20 years, working with clients aged 1 to 101. She currently works mainly with adults and seniors who are in need of or wear a cochlear implant. She is also a part-time professor at McGill University in the School of Communication and Sciences Disorders.

Cochlear Implants & Aural Rehabilitation...Then and Now

I have been working with clients with cochlear implants for 20 years and I have had the privilege of seeing the technology improve significantly over this time. Many of you may be hearing about how well people are hearing with cochlear implants or maybe you know someone who has had the cochlear implant surgery and is hearing much better than they used to. Over 300 000 people in Canada and the US now wear cochlear implants, but how exactly did we get here?

The first cochlear implant surgeries date back to the early 1960's, where a basic electrode was implanted inside the cochlea to allow people who had gone deaf to detect sounds around them. In Quebec, cochlear implantation has been around since the early 1980's. The technology has progressed over time, where people are now able to not only

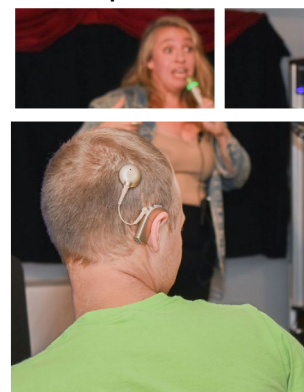
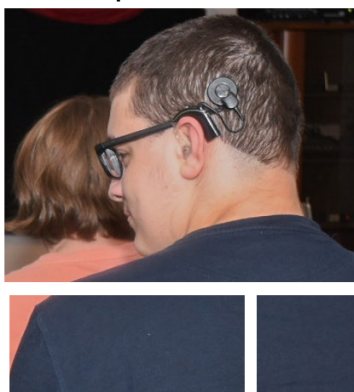
detect sounds around them, but to recognize those sounds and understand more clearly when people are speaking to them. Where several years ago, only people who had lost all of their hearing would be candidates for cochlear implants, the criteria is constantly evolving, and now clients who no longer obtain benefit from their hearing aids can be considered candidates for cochlear implants.

When I first started working at the Lethbridge-Layton-Mackay Rehabilitation Centre, our clients were wearing body worn cochlear implant processors, which included a small box at their waist that held a large battery, with a long cable leading up to the magnet and hearing piece at their ear, as seen in this picture.

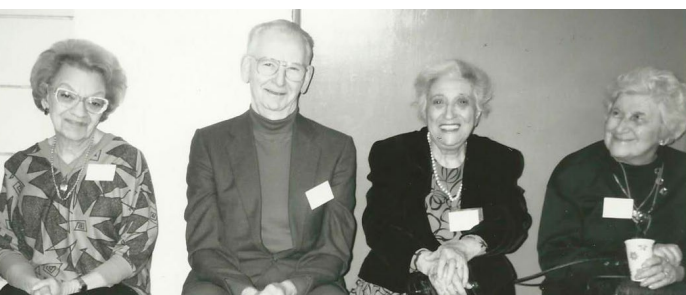


Joe Haupt. "Vintage Beltone Model "F" Hearing Aid with Earpiece". 30 January 2013. Taken from: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/51764518@N02/8429701609/>

Now, our clients wear smaller behind-the-ear or off-the-ear processors as seen in these 2 pictures.



Over the years, we have seen an evolution in the rehabilitation the clients receive following their cochlear implant surgery. The clients receive very important auditory training following their surgery to help them hear the best they can with their new cochlear implant. The Quebec Government has set up the Intensive Functional Rehabilitation (RFI) for all clients implanted in the province of Quebec.



During the RFI, an adult client spends 8-10 weeks in intensive rehabilitation with members of our rehabilitation team, which includes social workers, speech-language-pathologists, specialized educators and audiologists. The team works closely with the client to counsel them through the cochlear implant process and to answer questions the client and their families may have throughout the trajectory.

The team will help them learn to use the new cochlear implant processor to the best of their abilities, while doing auditory training exercises to train the brain to learn to hear and understand the new sounds.

There are now also many on-line practice tools and apps available to help our clients continue their auditory training at home.

With the advent of newer technology, people with cochlear implants can now control their processors through



As of 2020, Statistics Canada stated that 320 000 Canadians with a hearing disability do not use a hearing aid or a cochlear implant

an app on their cell phone that acts as a remote control. They have access to Bluetooth so they can stream phone calls and music from their cell phones directly into their cochlear implant processors.

There are also TV streamers, personal microphones and FM systems that can be used to make communication easier at home, in the car, in meetings or in a classroom. Aqua kits are also available to allow someone to wear their cochlear implant while swimming.

As of 2020, Statistics Canada stated that 320 000 Canadians with a hearing disability do not use a hearing aid or a cochlear implant. Research has indicated for years that losing your hearing and not getting the treatment needed leads to social isolation, loneliness, and even cognitive decline. We are aware, more so than ever before, of the importance of getting help if you are experiencing hearing loss.

If you are having difficulty understanding people clearly, often asking people to repeat, or having to increase the volume of the radio or television to hear it better, hearing aids or cochlear implants may be an option for you. Speak to your audiologist to be assessed and see what will work best for you.

Anna Gainey

MP | Députée
NDC—Westmount

Comment puis-je vous aider ?

How can I help?



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New Technologies

by Chris Webb



Chris Webb is a Montreal-based High School Teacher, a Google Certified Champion, Trainer, Innovator and Ambassador. He's also the co-founder of Zip Captions, a free to use Live Captioning tool that lives in the web browser.

Chris can be found at local and international conferences as well as presenting online workshops relating to educational technology.

Chris has also been pivotal in implementing a number of initiatives at his school for the hearing loss community, including an assistive listening system in the theatre and campaigning for visual fire alarms.

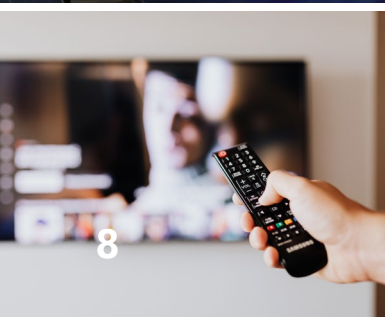
The History of Captions

Most of us by now are familiar with captions and their ubiquity in society, from TV to video streaming services, to inflight safety videos (thank you Air Canada), we find ourselves surrounded by captions. However, this has not always been the case, and as we all well know, they're often absent at the most necessary times. At the same time, the advent of online services and our use of mobile devices has led to the creation of new captioning tools such as live captioning of voice, and automatic captioning of video by Artificial Intelligence (AI). In this article we are going to explore the history of captions, the types of captions that are available and why we created Zip Captions, a live captioning tool.

The idea of a caption dates back to the 1800's, where silent films were the first to be shown at the 'movie theatre'. As the technology to capture both voice and video didn't become commonplace until the start of the 20th century, films were exclusively silent, and the 'voices' of the actors were added as text to the film itself, introducing the concept of the caption from the outset. These captions are what are referred to as subtitles as they translate what is being said into text for everyone to understand what is being said. These were not an accessibility consideration, but a practicality consideration. As technology advanced and video and voice could be recorded simultaneously on magnetic tape, captions slowly disappeared as they were no longer needed for the majority of the population to be able to understand the film.

In 1949 the Administration at the American School for the Deaf and the Lexington School for the Deaf lobbied Hollywood producers to add text annotations to a number of their productions; they agreed and these became known as captions.

The Captioned Films for the Deaf program officially opened at the Office of Education, in the United States under the guidance of Dr. Malcolm Norwood, a deaf bureaucrat.



It was not until the 1970's that captioning on television became available. To start with, special TV sets were needed as the functionality was not built in, but in 1972 PBS and ABC in the United States showed Julia Childs' The French Chef and The 6:30 News respectively, with open captions. By 1976 PBS was leading the way on captions, working on encoding these into TV broadcasts, and by the 1980's they had produced a box which could be connected to a TV to show captions for a number of TV shows. This was adopted by a number of TV networks, and on March 16, 1980, ABC, NBC and PBS debuted closed-captioned television shows.

Today more and more content is captioned, and what appears on TV must legally be captioned in Canada according to the CRTC. However, what appears online is far more of a grey area, the videos that appear from content creators on platforms such as YouTube are rarely captioned well, if at all, and the captions on streaming platforms are often inaccurate. There clearly is a lot more that can be done in this space.

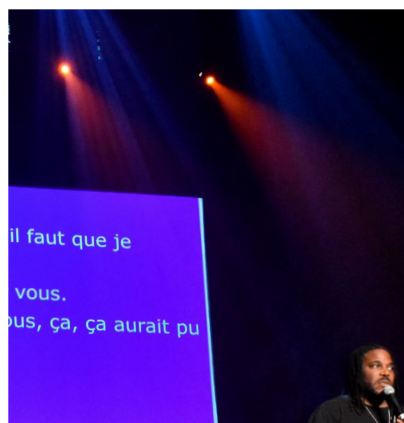
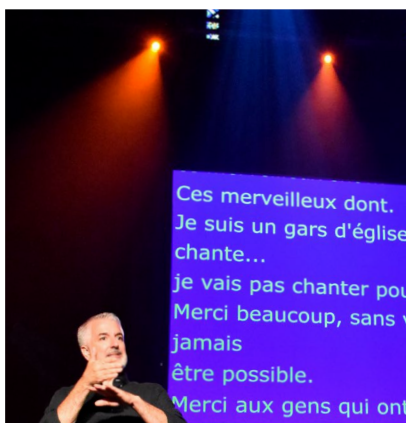
As a teacher, I often use video in my classroom, and after teaching a student with hearing loss,

it got me thinking whether there was a better way to provide captions. After many back and forth conversations we started to explore speech to text technology which matches voice patterns with existing models and predicts which word was most likely said by a person, allowing voice to be turned into text. This is the model that most video

conferencing platforms are using. Along with a friend, we decided that this tool should be unleashed from the realms of a video tool, and made available to everyone. After a few months of toil, we created Zip Captions (<https://zipcaptions.app>), a free to use Live Captioning tool which runs right from the browser.

But we haven't stopped aiming for the moonshot because, unless you live under a rock, I'm sure that you've heard about AI (you know that Artificial Intelligence business), and we've been talking about how we can allow you to train your own voice to text model. We've even been talking to some folks at Microsoft about how this can be done in your browser, or in the cloud. So the story of captioning is definitely not over, in fact, it's probably only just begun!

It was not until the 1970's that captioning on television became available.



Membership & Registration

Join Our Community

Join our vibrant community dedicated to enhancing accessibility and improving the lives of individuals with hearing loss. Discover how you can make a difference and be part of our empowering mission.

Exciting News: We are thrilled to announce that we have moved back to our old office space! This move brings us closer to our roots and enhances our ability to serve you better.

Membership fees for the upcoming year & benefits:

- **Individual Membership:** \$20 per year
- **Professional & Organizational Membership:** \$25 per year
- **Non-Profit Organizations & Their Employees:** \$20 per year.
- **Students and Veterans:** Free



Accessibility discount: Enjoy up to \$20 in monthly savings on your cell phone bills through our Accessibility discount program. We're committed to helping members access these savings.

Renew and Share: Please renew your membership and invite your friends and family to join Hear Quebec.

New Memberships are valid between April 1 and March 31 of each year and must be renewed annually. Please complete both sides of the 2024-25 membership form if you are a new member.

Renewal Membership Forms are available for the 2024-25 membership year. Past members will receive a simplified form by mail. Please complete, sign, and return it with payment for successful renewal.

Registration is obligatory for all activities, events, and services. Please register in advance, indicating your interest and completing payment if required.

Attendance Confirmation Policy: Please confirm your attendance upon receiving your reminder email to ensure efficient resource allocation. Failure to attend after registering may result in a \$10 fee, reinvested into future program setup.

You can now download membership forms from our website: www.hearhear.org/become-a-member/ and submit them via email. For further details on membership, accessibility discounts, and registration, contact info@hearhear.org or call 514-488-5552 ext 54500.

Our Goal: Help us celebrate our **45th anniversary** by becoming one of our **45 monthly donors**. Your steady support allows us to plan and implement programs effectively.

Benefits of Being a Monthly Donor: As a monthly donor, you provide vital ongoing support and receive annual tax receipts for donations over \$25. Join us in sustaining accessibility and inclusivity year-round.

Payment Methods:

- Secure online payments at <https://hearhear.nationbuilder.com/donate>. Please use the comment section to express what the payment is for, ie. "membership fee \$20," "donation \$25."
- You may also pay in-person at our office using cash, cheque, credit card, or debit card.
- Mail cheques payable to **Hear Québec**.



Programs & Services

Support

Our support programs are designed to meet the needs of both young adults and seniors, ensuring that many can enjoy them. Our activities take place in accessible, peer-centered environments. For your convenience, we offer programs and activities throughout the day and evening, with some available in a hybrid format. Please note that these programs will run from September to March 2025.

Peer Mentoring: Our peer mentors are volunteers who share your experience of hearing loss. They are matched with you to provide one-on-one support, sharing valuable tips, tricks, and lessons to help you adapt to your hearing loss.

Reach out to us by phone or email to be paired with a peer mentor!



◇ Daytime

Fall Exceptional Lunch League: Join us for lunch and snacks every second or third Thursday of the month from 11 am to 1 pm. Connect with others who share hearing loss while indulging in great food and great company. *NEW* this year we are offering two locations available: NDG and Dorval.

Mode: **In-person**
Where: **Dorval: Sarto-Desnoyers Community Center**
NDG: 7000 Sherbrooke St West. Room C-234
Days: **Thursdays**
Time: **11:00am to 1:00pm**

Dates: **Dorval – Every third Thursday of the month (September 19th, October 17th & November 21st)**
NDG: Every second Thursday every month (September 12th, October 10th & November 14th)

Winter Daytime Coffee Breaks: Weekly coffee meet-ups for those with hearing loss. Sip, share and engage in thoughtful conversations in a welcoming environment.

Mode: **Virtual**
Days: **Wednesdays**
Time: **1:30-3:00pm**
Dates: **January 15th until March 26th**



◇ Evening

Cocktail Evenings: Are you looking for a community to connect with and have fun? We've got you! As part of the hearing loss community, join us for our evening social activities every 3rd Friday of the month. Connect, meet up, and dive into enjoyable experiences with others who share hearing loss.

Fall Dates

Time: 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

- **September 20th: Laser Game Evolution at 1226 Saint-Catherine St W**
- **October 18th: Randolph Gaming Pub 18 + in Quartier Latin**
- **November 22nd: Putting Edge Mini Golf at 3500 Boulevard Cote Vertu Ouest ("Invite your Family and friends" event)**

Winter Dates

Time: 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

- **January 17th 2025: Indoor Skating at Atrium Le 1000 (Family and friends event)**
- **February - Date & Location TBC: Accessible Movie at Theatre**
- **March 21st 2025: Ceramic Cafe - Location TBC**

Thorns & Roses Cochlear Implant Group: Feeling overwhelmed about your cochlear implant journey or have valuable tips to share? You're not alone! Join us for our monthly peer-led support sessions, held every fourth Tuesday. Whether your cochlear implant is new, you've had it for a while, or you're still waiting, this is your opportunity to connect with others who understand your experience and share valuable insights.

Mode: **Virtual**
Days: **Tuesdays**
Time: **6:30 pm to 8:00pm**

Dates: **September 24th, October 22nd, November 26th, January 28th, February 25th & March 25th**



Skills

Speechreading: We are thrilled to announce that our Speechreading Program is back at two locations, celebrating our 45th anniversary in style! Elevate your speechreading skills with personalized, in-person instruction. Don't miss this fantastic opportunity to enhance your communication skills and connect with others in your community! Commit to attending all sessions to gain the most from the program. Spaces are limited, so register early and secure your spot today.

NDG:

Mode: **In person**
Where: **7000 Sherbrooke St West, Room TBD**
Time: **10am-12pm**
Days: **Tuesdays**
Dates: **From September 17th to November 26th**
Fees: **\$40 for members/
\$60 for non members**

Dorval:

Mode: **In person**
Where: **Sarto-Desnoyers Center**
Time: **1pm - 3pm**
Days: **Wednesdays**
Dates: **From September 18th to November 27th**
Fees: **\$40 for members/
\$60 for non members**

*If there is a concern due to financial hardship, please contact info@hearhear.org or call (514) 488-5552 ext. 54500.



Resources & Referrals

Referral Service: At Hear Quebec, we take pride in delivering prompt and reliable information through our dedicated team and valuable partnerships. For personalized assistance and resources, please reach out to Faith Gould directly. With her own experience in hearing loss, Faith is committed to providing the support and answers you need.

HEARTalks: Stay informed with HEARTalks—get expert insights and practical solutions for hearing loss directly from the pros!



Mode: **Hybrid -**
Where: **7000 Sherbrooke St West & Google Meet**
Time: **6:30 pm - 8:00 pm**

- **September 17th: Navigating Life with a Cochlear Implant: Expert Tips for Adjustment and Maximization**
- **October 8th: Financial Support for Your Success: Learn About Scholarships and Bursaries for Students with Disabilities!**

- **November Date TBC: Enhance Your Hearing Experience: A Practical Guide to T-loops, T-coils, and the Latest Apps and Bluetooth Technology**
- **February 4th 2025: Maximize Your Tax Savings: Discover CRA Rebates for People with Disabilities**
- **March - Date TBD: Transform Your Work Experience: Grants, Services, and Technology for Hearing Loss and Other Accessibility Needs**



Awareness & Accessibility

Elevate Hearing Accessibility with Consult **ME**- A Step Toward a More Inclusive Montreal.

We're excited to share more about **Consult ME**, our new consultation service designed to enhance hearing accessibility at your events and activities across Montreal. This service offers custom training in Knowledge, Practice, and Sustainability, empowering your organization to reach new audiences and strengthen your EDI initiatives.

Help make Montreal more inclusive! If you see a need for greater accessibility —whether in churches, book clubs, groups, or everyday activities you enjoy—contact us today to discover how **Consult ME** can help you achieve your accessibility needs and connect with the broader community.

Include ME at Home

Do you have an amplified phone or TV device that's not being used to its full potential?

We understand that learning how to use new technology can be challenging. That's why Hear Quebec is excited to offer our new

Include ME at Home service! With **Include ME at Home**, we provide personalized support to help you get the most out of your assistive listening

devices. Our friendly, trained volunteers are ready to:

- **Answer Your Questions:** Get expert advice on how to use your device effectively.
- **Troubleshoot Issues:** Receive help with any technical problems you might be facing.
- **Visit You at Home:** Enjoy the convenience of support right where you need it.



Centre de réadaptation
**LETHBRIDGE-
LAYTON-MACKAY**
Rehabilitation Centre

In partnership with Lethbridge Layton Mackay and with funding from the Government of Canada, we're here to make sure your assistive devices work for you, not against you.

Reach out today to schedule a visit and start making the most of your technology!

Include ME in Residence

Introducing Include ME in Residence: New Pilot Project

We're excited to launch **Include ME in Residence**, our new pilot project building on **Include ME at Home**. This initiative brings hands-on accessibility training to residences!

Hear Quebec will:

- **Train Volunteers:** We'll visit your residence to train volunteers as Accessibility Ambassadors.
- **Provide Support:** Ambassadors will assist with basic hearing aid troubleshooting, understanding hearing health pathways, and using assistive devices.

Running a residence? Want to boost accessibility? Contact us today to see how **Include ME in Residence** can transform your space!

Important Dates

Holiday Brunch: Celebrate the season with us at our Holiday Brunch this December in Dorval! Enjoy a delicious meal, festive cheer, and great company. Stay tuned for more details!

Save the Date: March 3rd for World Hearing Day!

We have exciting plans for World Hearing Day, and we can't wait to share them with you. Follow us on social media and keep an eye on your email for updates!



Hearing Journey

By Hannah Vogan



Hannah Vogan is a student at Concordia University studying journalism and poetry. She is the Editor-in-Chief of The Link Newspaper by day, and a mango sticky rice connoisseur by night.

45 Years of Hear Entendre Québec

Alvin Goldman, one of the first members of Hear Entendre Québec, recalls the day the organization got its first name, a smile grows widely across his face.

In 1979, Alvin was adapting to his hearing loss with help from audiologist Dale Bonnycastle at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. One day, he received a letter from Dale pointing out that she was approaching him and 13 others to join aural rehabilitation meetings, in order to develop connections among those with hearing loss, sharing each other's problems and common solutions to those difficulties.

Alvin describes how the chair of the meeting that day told the group, "I think it is about time we started considering a name." To Alvin, choosing a name was more complex than it might seem.

The chairperson turned to the blackboard and asked why they attended the meetings and why it was important to them. The answers, recalled Alvin, pertained to the impact and challenges of hearing loss. After more deliberation, the chair wrote "communication" on the board, saying that those with hearing challenges need to communicate just like everyone else. "At times, it cannot be so easy; it can be very difficult," Alvin professed.

As the chair's hand left the blackboard, other terms arose during the discussion, like "helping one another" and "aid." After collecting a fair sum of keywords that described the appeal of their visits, the chair circled back to the blackboard to reflect on their word bank and come up with some kind of name.

"You have the word 'communication,' for example, and the word 'Aid.' And she said, 'How about one word instead of two words. How about "communicaid?"' Alvin beamed as he recounted the positive reception from the group.

When the chair then asked the group what and who communicaid was for, they collectively agreed it was for those who were dealing with their hearing

impairment. Then, with those handpicked words floating around the room, someone yelled out "CHIP." Alvin remembered laughing – Communicaid for Hearing Impaired Persons was the name of the organization, and would remain so for 40 years until CHIP made the switch to the currently used Hear Entendre Québec.

Since his first meeting 45 years ago, Alvin has remained in the Hear Québec ecosystem. Whether preparing grants for the organization or joining its Board of Directors, Alvin has been a huge support in Hear Entendre Québec's growth. Alvin noted that what he loved most, especially in the early meetings,



was the feeling of home and that you were not alone with your hearing impairment. Ideas, attitudes and feelings contributed by members are always the most excellent form of contributions members can offer; according to Alvin. Peer support makes the meetings so special and allows the organization to thrive.

Dale, alongside other audiologists and McGill University students, began these meetings by picking from her patient files. These meetings became highly successful as they were based on self-help, peer-to-peer assistance, optimizing communication, and learning to live fully with a hearing loss as much as possible. "We started with a very dynamic group," Dale said. "Audiologists don't have all the answers. People who live with hearing loss, who walk the walk day by day, can share in an impactful and realistic way. Audiologists can spout all they want, but those with first-hand experience can relate and share meaningfully."

When the organization got its first grant of \$1000, Dale strongly echoed the excitement felt by the group, purchasing a small amplification system with a mic to pass around at meetings; it all just snowballed from there. The organization began to solidify itself by developing a board, bylaws, charter, and patents and then registered as a non-profit in 1982, pushing the expansion of the group even further.

Heidy Wager, the current executive director at Hear Québec, and Dale both agree that the organization wouldn't have been so successful without its dedicated team of passionate and skilled volunteers. Hear Entendre Quebec outstandingly remained solely volunteer-led for 35 years after its inception, with a paid role introduced to allow for a salaried executive director.

Since 1979, Hear Entendre Québec has organized workshops, presentations, support groups, courses, and other events to raise awareness for the hard-of-hearing community. The organization has also educated, advised, and participated in outreach work in Montreal and continues to do so.

"I used to daydream about the idea of having hearing helpers who could reach out to these seniors,"



Dale said about the organization's expansion of programs. Hear Québec has recently launched two new programs, Include **ME** at home and in residence, which revolve around making assistive technology and our environments more accessible. Volunteers with lived experience and training offer support with ALD technology in members' homes, lending a helping hand.

When the organization got its first grant of \$1000, Dale strongly echoed the excitement felt by the group...

Additionally, in 2019, Hear Québec held the first-ever fully accessible comedy show in Montreal with 300 people in attendance. They had remote live captioning, an

ASL interpreter, a T coil hearing loop, FM systems, wheelchair accessibility, and featured hard-of-hearing comedians. The event was so popular it has led to more performances with ZOOFEEST and Ville de Montreal which has led to the creation of the Consult **ME** program. Which bridges the gaps and helps make Montreal events more accessible.

"We offer support: "nothing about us without us" — everything is peer-centered because that is who we are at our core. We changed our name but we are still considered home to our members" said Heidy.

Alvin explained that those with hearing loss choose Hear Québec and its services because they are focused on sharing problems and finding solutions—" which is the beginning and the end of what we want and need," said Alvin.

As Hear Québec celebrates its 45 year legacy of supporting an inclusive community, it also celebrates 45 years of trailblazing with a loving and compassionate team of volunteers and members.

Evolution of Hearing Aids



My father felt he could become unemployed because of his hearing loss. Since he was very familiar with hearing aids, having worn one for many years, he decided, in 1952, to start his own business fitting hearing aids.

I graduated from Radio College of Canada as an electronic technician and was then employed at RCA. I worked all across Canada and in West Africa. I started working with my father in 1966 repairing hearing aids. I gradually took over the business as a hearing aid acoustician. I enjoyed working with people of all ages, helping them hear better. I retired in 2009.

I also really like cookies.

My father had ear infections as a child before antibiotics were available and as a result had a severe hearing loss. He wore a hearing aid for as long as I can remember. He only wore a left aid because discrimination was much better in that ear. He preferred a body-worn hearing aid for two reasons. There was less chance of feedback than with a behind the ear model and he could hear better in noise. The microphone was located on his chest so would only pick up sound directly in front of him. This is called the body baffle effect. Hearing aids with directional microphones were not yet invented. When using the telephone he would hold it upside down because the microphone was on his chest. It did look a little weird.

The very first hearing aids were ear trumpets and speaking tubes that were used hundreds of years ago. I remember bringing a hearing aid to a patient in the hospital. She had written "MY HEARING AID" on a paper towel tube that she would hold up to her ear. It worked for her after her electronic hearing aid had stopped working.

The first electric hearing aids were invented in 1895.

They consisted of a battery, a carbon microphone and an

earphone all connected in series. I have a collection of antique hearing aids and have listened to one of these aids. I found it had mild amplification and was very noisy.

In 1920 the first vacuum tube hearing aid was invented. They were called two-piece hearing aids. My father wore this type of aid. Two large batteries were worn separate to the hearing aid itself. After 1945 improvements in design allowed the manufacture of one-piece hearing aids, still using two batteries because they worked with miniature vacuum tubes.

In 1948 transistor hearing aids became available. They were still only cord model units but much smaller and used only one battery. The first eyeglass hearing aid was developed in 1955. The amplifier was built into the temple bar of the glasses. In 1956 the first BTE (behind the ear) model became available. Both these styles of aids were quite large.

In 1982 a major improvement was the first all-digital hearing aid. Further improvements occurred in the mid 1990's. Hearing aids became more programmable which meant there were different settings or memories for different listening situations. There could also be a telephone coil setting to



The very first hearing aids were ear trumpets and speaking tubes that were used hundreds of years ago.



Credit: Science Museum, London. | Taken from: <https://www.lookandlearn.com/history-images/YW064953L/Flexible-tube-hearing-aids-were-also-known-as-%E2%80%98conversation-tubes%E2%80%99>



technologies are being developed. Artificial intelligence (AI) will continue to allow hearing aids to adjust settings in different listening environments. Also if your hearing aid is compatible with your cell phone there are other apps that can be downloaded to your cell phone and transferred to your hearing aid.



These are the styles and some features of currently available hearing aids.

- BTE (behind the ear)
- RIC (receiver in the canal is a BTE with a small wire connecting it to the receiver located in the canal)
- ITE (in the ear)
- ITC (in the canal)
- CIC (completely in the canal)
- IIC (invisible in the canal-a bit smaller than a CIC)
- Telephone coils are available on BTEs, RICs, ITEs and ITCs.
- Bluetooth technology is available on BTEs, RICs, ITEs, ITCs and CICs.
- Rechargeable batteries are available only on BTEs, RICs, ITEs & ITCs.

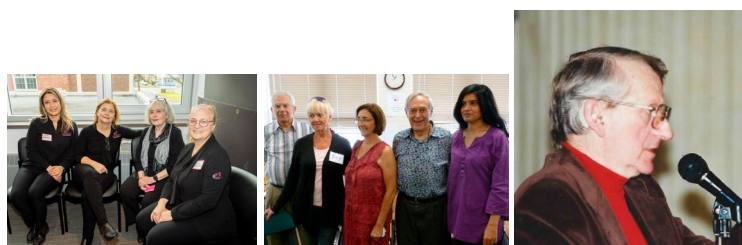
help one hear better on the phone or in a room with an inductive loop system installed.

In 2010 the first hearing aids with Bluetooth technology became available. Bluetooth works by using short range very high frequency radio transmission to connect a hearing aid to other devices like a music player, a computer or a smart phone. If you use a smart phone regularly you can have an app on the phone that allows you to adjust your hearing aid. There is no need to carry a separate remote control or push a button on the aid to change settings. The cell phone becomes the remote control. If you prefer not to ever have to adjust your hearing aid there are models that self adjust depending on the listening environment.

Binaural hearing aids give better results if both ears can be aided. All hearing aids work with batteries that are quite small and sometimes difficult to change. Rechargeable hearing aids can be more convenient. There is no need to change the batteries, but you must remember to put them in their charger overnight.

Cochlear implants are sometimes recommended for a person with a severe to profound hearing loss. An electrode is inserted in the cochlea and an external portion is worn behind the ear.

While hearing aids cannot return your hearing to normal nor completely eliminate background noise, they do improve the quality of life for many. New



Community Highlights

By Dale Bonnycastle



Dale Bonnycastle is a retired Audiologist who has worked in the field for 35 years. She holds a M.Sc. from McGill University in Human Communication Disorders. Dale has worked in hospitals and her last position was at the Mackay Center which is now part of the Lethbridge, Layton, Mackay Rehabilitation Center. She has always been interested in the impact hearing loss has on all aspects of a person's life and how people adapt and cope with hearing loss.

Dale has been involved in Hear Quebec (formerly known as CHIP) since its beginning and was a founding member of this organization. In her spare time she enjoys detective novels, good British TV, yoga and spending time in the country.

My Audiology Journey Over 45 Years

In this article I will highlight the progress and changes I have seen in the field of Audiology over my working life. There have been numerous advancements and innovations in the field over these decades, which have led to significant improvements in the diagnosis and treatment of hearing loss and balance disorders. I cannot do justice to all that has been done in a short article but here are some snippets of my Audiology journey in Montreal, first from a hospital setting and then a Rehabilitation Center.

I was first employed at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, a small hospital in the borough of Notre Dame de Grace. I worked alone, and I was fully occupied testing patients, one patient per hour, 7 in a day, every day. Two full time ENT doctors sent me a steady stream of referrals.

This setting was certainly not without its challenges, both for myself and the patients I tried to help. At that time, Medicare did not cover the cost of hearing aids and so cost was an issue for many patients.

Hearing aids at that time were basic so it was essential to explain what we then called "the limits of amplification. Hearing aids do not cure the loss of hearing, but do make sound louder."

The story of how CHIP came about has been told elsewhere. I will only say that in 1979 services/resources for persons with hearing loss were extremely limited. In most hospital settings, there was simply not enough time in the hour slot allotted per patient to do a lot of helping.

In 1979, Dr. Jerome Alpiner, an American audiologist, wrote a seminal book called Handbook of Adult Rehabilitative Audiology which addressed the impact of hearing loss on all aspects of a person's life. It focused on the whole person, their lived experiences,



communication and psychosocial challenges.

Dr. Alpiner's Innovative approach was comprehensive, holistic, and client centered. You were not treating the hearing loss but helping people who have a hearing loss and their entourage.

That book inspired and encouraged me to deepen my knowledge and improve my skills in this area and keep on doing the group work.

Today Aural Rehabilitation programs flourish and are part of many Audiology practices in hospitals and

Rehabilitation Centers.

Fast forward to the 80s, The Queen Elizabeth post was followed by another hospital stint at Centre Hospitalier Pierre Boucher, in Longueuil.

Hearing aids do not cure the loss of hearing but only make sound louder."



During my time here a significant breakthrough made hearing aids and ALDs accessible to all Quebecers. First the OPHQ developed a payment scheme covering the cost of these devices, and later the RAMQ program came into effect.

Meanwhile many other important developments were happening in the 80s and 90s. Here are a few:

Newborn hearing screening programs were developing, leading to early detection and intervention.

Auditory processing disorders were becoming better understood and new diagnostic tools and intervention programs were developed.

New techniques and approaches for tinnitus relief (ringing in the ears) were evolving.

There were dramatic changes and improvements in Cochlear Implant technology, leading to improved outcomes and the expansion of candidacy criteria.

Hearing aids had evolved, become digital and objective assessment protocols were developed and came into routine practice.

In my last 20 years of work I was employed at the Mackay Center (Decarie site) which later became the MAB, Mackay Center and is now the LLM. When I started there, adult services were just beginning but they evolved rapidly. I also experienced working in a school environment. This was an exciting time for me because, while assessments were done, there was a focus on rehabilitation.



I was introduced to do different and varied tasks and worked in a multidisciplinary team.

There was time here for counseling clients, running lipreading and support groups, doing outreach presentations. I grew my knowledge about hearing aids, assistive devices, cochlear implants, and community resources. This was very interesting work in a completely different setting.

In conclusion, I have seen many changes and advancements in the field of Audiology. Our knowledge of hearing and balance has grown, we have seen amazing technological changes, and our scope of practice as audiologists has broadened significantly. Aural rehabilitation practices have improved and there are more solutions to hearing loss than ever before. There is less stigma and more accessibility as hearing loss becomes better understood by the population at large. For me, it has been a privilege and an amazing journey to be part of this.



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