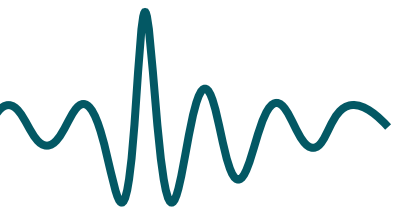


TYGERBERG HOSPITAL - STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY COCHLEAR IMPLANT UNIT NEWSLETTER

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NOVEMBER 2019 NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2019 NUUSBRIEF



Celebrating our 800th cochlear implant recipient during the annual get together on the 9th November 2019. It is 33 years now since the first cochlear implant operation was done here at Tygerberg Hospital on the 4th November 1986 by Prof Derrick Wagenfeld.

The stories below are excerpts from our patient and parents' stories - their full stories are kept together with their photograph in an album at the Cochlear Implant Unit. All the recipients expressed their heartfelt thanks to family, friends and the Tygerberg Hospital Cochlear Implant team for the support they received in their journeys. Many also gave thanks to God.

Hieronder is verkorte weergawe van stories van ons inplanting gebruikers en hul ouers. Die volledige stories en 'n foto is beskikbaar in die foto-album by die Kogeleëre Inplantingseenheid. Al die pasiënte het hulle families, vriende en die Tygerberg Hospitaal Kogeleëre Inplantingseenheid bedank vir die ondersteuning wat hulle ontvang het tydens die inplantingsproses. Baie pasiënte gee ook alle eer aan God.

ATHALIAH MEYER (No. 733)



Athaliah, my third child was also born hearing impaired and my journey started once again at the Carel du Toit Center. Athalia was first fitted with hearing aids but eventually it became evident that she needed a cochlear implant.

The operation was on 28th May and the switch on was in July 2018. What a blessed day. The sounds were new to her

ROCHELLE MCDONALD (No. 734)



I was completely deaf in my left ear and could hear with a hearing aid in my right ear. Seeing that my hearing on my right was progressively deteriorating, it was necessary to start with the preparation for the cochlear implant on my left ear. After the relevant tests and examinations, I was implanted on my left ear on 28th May 2018, and my switch-on

was on the 28th of June 2018. I would recommend this journey to anyone with severe hearing loss.

ETHAN GOCH (No. 736)



Ethan se gehoor is getoets net na sy geboorte. Dit was 'n groot skok om te hoor dat hy doof is, maar ons het geweet ons moet sterk wees vir ons kind. Kort daarna het hy 'n stel gehoorapparaat gekry maar is in kennis gestel dat Ethan 'n kogleëre inplanting moet kry om 100% reg te kan hoor. Na al die toetse is ons laat weet dat alles reg is vir die inplanting. Die ONK het 'n motiverings brief aan ons mediese fonds gestuur maar hulle sou niks betaal, want ons is nie op die regte plan nie. Ons het toe begin met fondsinsamelings in Maart 2018 en teen Junie 2018 het ons genoeg fondse gehad dat Ethan in beide

ore sy inplantings kon kry. Ons is baie dankbaar aan al die mense wat 'n bydrae gemaak het om vir Ethan te kan laat hoor. Ethan gaan elke week vir spraakterapie en gaan vanaf Januarie 2020 by Carel Du Toit begin skool gaan. Ethan is 'n normale besige 2 jarige seuntjie. Dis nie altyd maklik nie en baie keuses en besluite wat gemaak moet word. Ons leer nog elke dag en sien uit na die pad voortoe.

JACQUES FOURIE (NO. 738)



I was born hard of hearing. My hearing was never tested before the age of 3½ years. The audiologist provided me with two hearing aids that I wore on a belt around my waist. I had no language at this time, but after a while I started to talk.

When I grew up and started to work, it was not easy to find a job as people struggled to communicate with me. I always had to rely on someone to pass on messages, as I could not hear on the phone.

In 2018 I received the cochlear implant and it changed my life. My boss can now contact me on the phone when I am out of the office, making life easier for both of us. I now feel more confident that if I have to apply for a new job that I will have better success. I can now hear when people talk to me. I would recommend the cochlear implant to anyone who is hard of hearing, as it will really change your life.

AMANDA LE ROUX (No. 739)



Ek beskou myself as bevoorreg dat ek op 71 hierdie operasie kon ondergaan. Dit stel my in staat om steeds met my werk aan te gaan – iets wat ek andersins nie sou kon doen nie.

Die proses was vir my soos 'n reis, met wonderlike ondersteuning van die chirurg asook die oudioloog wat die reis met my meegemaak het. Dis wonderlik om met albei kante te kan hoor.

LISA MULLER (No. 741)



Lisa was diagnosed with profound hearing loss just before her third birthday. We were in total shock, but soon realised that a cochlear implant will be the only solution. Two months later she was blessed with a cochlear implant operation that was successfully done.

After the switch on, we could see the positive change in

her. The frustration that she had every-day because she couldn't understand what we were saying, slowly went away. Every day she is learning new words and can already say four word sentences with ease. To us it is amazing to see her communicate with friends and family. The hard work starts after the operation, but in a year her progress is unbelievable and most importantly, she is a very happy little girl.

STEVEN MEYER (No. 742)



Dit was 'n moeilike besluit om 'n kogleëre inplanting te kry, maar vandag is ek nie spyt daaroor nie. Ek ly nou 'n nuwe positiewe lewe te danke aan die operasie en is beskikbaar vir raad en advies indien iemand dit benodig en hul kan my enige tyd kontak. My kommunikasie met die publiek, families en vriende is nou stresvry aangesien ek tenvolte kan hoor.

LEMEUL MEYER (No. 743)



Lemuel, my second child and with a first born who was already deaf, the fear of having another deaf child made me feel very anxious. Unfortunately it was confirmed that Lemuel was also born deaf. We were referred to the Carel du Toit Centre and so our journey began.

He was fitted with hearing aids and after wearing it for a few years we were told that Lemuel's right ear was

getting weaker and a cochlear implant was suggested. My boy's switch-on was in September 2018, and it was all smiles. Lemuel was inseparable from his cochlear from that day. Days turned into months and finally a year. I could see my boy turned into a more bolder, confident and mature individual. I look so forward to a brighter future for my son.

SIYAMTHANDA KAPE (No. 744)



I had a hearing loss for many years and I never thought the day would come for me to be able to hear again. I almost gave up on life because I saw no progress in my hearing. The day I heard about how the cochlear implant works, I did not believe it would help me. I googled it, just to have a clear understanding about it, and I knew in my heart that it's time for me to go out there and be somebody.

The switch-on day was in August 2018, this was the greatest experience of my life, hearing different voices and different things. It was an exciting time for me as I could not believe that it was me hearing the world. Thank you so much, my life is much better than before, as I have a bright future ahead of me.

MARITZA VAN NIEKERK (No. 745)



Ek het my gehoor verloor toe ek 1½ jaar oud was en kroep opgedoen het. Sederdien het ek gehoorapparate gedra. Toe ek 37 jaar oud raak, het dit vir my begin voel my gehoor gaan agteruit en ek sukkel om by werksvergaderings te hoor. My dogtertjie se fyn en hoë stemmetjie het dit ook moeilik gemaak om haar te hoor. Julie 2018 het ek die operasie in my regteroor ondergaan met die aanskakeling in Augustus. Dit was 'n geweldige aanpassing en ek kon nie aan die begin hoor nie. Ek het net vibrasies in my kop gevoel vir 'n paar maande. Elke keer as ek die prosesseerder aangesit het, het dit my kop baie seer gemaak. Ek het geweldige ondersteuning van

my man gekry en ons het elke aand luisteroefeninge gedoen. Na 'n jaar kan ek 85% van die klanke hoor en ek hoor steeds elke dag nuwe klanke. Ek is steeds gewoonnd daaraan om na mense se gesigte te kyk as hulle praat, maar ek oefen hard om hoofsaaklik net te luister.

In Augustus 2019 is my linkeroor operasie gedoen met die aanskakeling op 1 Oktober. Ek het regtig nie geweet wat om te verwag nie aangesien my verwagtinge die vorige keer te hoog was. Groot was my verbasing toe ek dadelik klank kon hoor en die vibrasie was bitter min. Ek is baie positief oor die pad vorentoe en glo met harde werk sal ek kom waar ek graag wil wees met my gehoor.

NICK GORRIE (No. 746)



At the age of 31, I fell off a balcony and landed on my left side. As a result I lost hearing in my one ear only (luckily). At first I did not want to have a cochlear implant. I was scared of the operation and that the sound would be too different to what I was normally used to. After one year I slowly lost a bit of my confidence. In any social environment I would always have to sit on the left hand end

of tables to position people on my right side. Sometimes the seating arrangements were not possible. It was very challenging when standing in a circular group having conversations. This difficulty slowly affected my behaviour, and so I decided to investigate having a cochlear implant. With the warm and incredible guidance from the specialists, I decided to undergo a cochlear implant. It is the best decision I made. My confidence and behaviour has been completely restored back to where it was – I truly am grateful.

WILLEM ZEELIE (No. 748)



Ek het vanaf 1998 my gehoor in my linkeroor begin verloor. Ek het egter eers vanaf 2007 'n gehoorapparaat gedra. Ek het met die duurste gehoorapparaat nogsteeds nie volle gehoor gehad nie. Ek het verskeie gehoortoetse ondergaan en elke keer net verneem dat my gehoor verswak.

My inplanting het in Augustus 2018 plaasgevind. Ek was maar

bang, want ek het nie geweet wat om te verwag nie. Die herstel proses was uitdagend, maar die moeite werd. My aanskakeling was in Oktober 2018 gedoen. Wat 'n dag. Die trane het vrylik gevloei toe ek my oudioloog hoor praat, dit het wel vreemd geklink maar daar was klank. Elke dag is 'n leer proses, maar die moeite werd. Die eerste keer in jare kan ek ook voëls hoor fluit.

TRACEY JEFFREY (No. 749)

"I LOVE WAKING UP TO BIRDSONG"



On 24th August 2019, I celebrated my cochlear implant's first birthday and my daughter's 21st - a joyful day indeed.

It all came about during an overnight stay in Kingsbury Hospital last year when my general surgeon, was concerned about my reliance on lip-reading, which was being compromised by my deteriorating vision. My

audiograms were reviewed and I was referred to the dynamic Cochlear Implant Unit at Tygerberg Hospital. After detailed hearing tests and MRI assessment, it was confirmed that I was a suitable candidate for a cochlear implant.

At the same time my son had contacted one of his lecturers at UCT law school, who had a cochlear implant to find out more about his cochlear implant experience. I found it very helpful to receive information from a recipient's point of view.

My implant has been such a blessing because I suffer from Usher's Syndrome – profound deafness in both ears and Retinitis Pigmentosa, a progressive condition leading to limited peripheral vision, difficulty with light/dark adaptation and night blindness. This makes lip-reading and communication more difficult, particularly in subdued lighting conditions.

Since my "switch on" I no longer need to rely on lip-reading and I am able to participate in conversations even at nighttime; answer telephone calls, listen to the radio and enjoy live theatre. My son treated me to a musical show, "Kinky Boots" at the Athol Fugard theatre last week. I was sitting in the back row and could hear most of the dialogue and lyrics – what an amazing experience! I can hear! Practise listening and enjoy the sounds of life – especially waking up to birdsong!

SINOBOMI MXABO (No. 751)



My hearing deteriorated in September 2014 when I was on MDR TB treatment. I could not hear any sound or people talking. People had to write everything down in order to communicate with me. That was a difficult time for me, especially because I lost my job due to my hearing loss. In November 2016 I moved from Eastern

Cape to Cape Town. The audiologist at Khayelitsha district hospital referred me for a cochlear implant assessment at Tygerberg Cochlear Implant Unit. My surgery was on the 27th of August 2018 and my switch-on was 3 weeks after. On the first day of the activation the sound was terrible and I could not believe that I was hearing sounds again. On my way home I was very excited, I had to pinch myself to make sure I was not dreaming. Since then my hearing has improved a lot. As a result of how well I am doing, I am able to work again and now selling Acornkids products.

ELIJAH HARDENBERG (No. 752)



When our son, Elijah, was 18 months old, we had a routine visit to his pediatrician and we mentioned that he was not talking yet. She suggested a hearing test. The hearing test showed us that Elijah had a profound hearing loss in both his ears, which he was most probably born with. Elijah received his first cochlear implant in September

2018 and his second implant in January 2019. We have never looked back or doubted our decision to give our boy the gift of hearing. We have had many difficulties, tantrums and obstacles thrown in our way but Elijah has proven to us that he can do everything and anything that a hearing child can do. We believe that it can only get better from here and have faith that soon he will be talking up a storm.

DAWN LILY (No. 753)



A Cochlear Implant was recommended to me in 2013, but I was in denial as it only affected my right ear and I could obtain benefit with my hearing aid on my left ear.

In 2018 I agreed to go to the Cochlear Implant Unit and see the audiologist. With a lot of hand holding, my audiologist saw me through to my operation on 20th September 2018. I have not had hearing in my

right ear for the past 32 years and the implant team was "hopeful" but not sure that this would be a resounding success. I have to say that in my mind this has been a complete success. In May 2019 I ended up with otitis media in my left (non-cochlear ear) which meant that if I did not have the implant I would have had no hearing while the ear infection was getting treated. The cochlear implant allows me to function on a day-to-day basis with no problems and as a result of realizing this; I now use the implant every day for a large part of the day, before putting in the hearing aid into my left ear.

AKHIL TOMY (No. 754)



I was born partially deaf, started wearing hearing aids at the age of nine. In 2017, I started losing my hearing even more on my left ear. First I thought my hearing aid needed to be repaired. Months later we did a hearing test and saw I was profoundly deaf on my left ear. I looked into cochlear implants and with the different assessments and confirmation that I was a candidate,

I decided to start the journey. At first there were weird robotic sounds, which made it difficult to hear. Over time it became easier to differentiate sounds, it is just like learning to hear for the first time. I went back home in June 2019 and my aunt noticed there was a huge difference in my hearing. I ask to repeat less, I can enjoy conversations more, but noisy environments are still a challenge. Going ahead with the cochlear implant has been life changing.

PETER BOSSENGER (No. 755)

My Long Walk to Hearing:



At age 13 I first noticed my hearing loss which progressively got worse over the years. My Mom was also deaf so that prepared me for my hearing loss. Now at age 74 years and retired I followed my sister to her appointment at Tygerberg Hospital's Cochlear Implant Unit and learnt that the cochlear implant will stop the steady

decline and deliver a stable and higher level of hearing after the implant is switched on.

The operation was on the 4th October and the 23rd October the SWITCH ON: Then: People talking. Loud. Noise. Wowee. I can hear again, ticking of a clock, soft air conditioning sounds, Wind outside, Birds chirping, Whispers, Kettle boiling. My favourite television shows, News, Gospel choirs, my Labrador sleeping, rain on the roof, my computer humming. Speech in noisy backgrounds. After 5 Mapping sessions, I am now seriously impressed. Lip-reading is now a thing of the past. You feel like part of society again. Hallelujah!

What the CI does is to allow you to hear more and better than before - BUT in a totally different way. It's a new way to hear. The quality is great, the sound is out of this world in another planet somewhere beyond all the galaxies!!! But, one gets used to it quickly. The vast improvement is welcome.

CONNOR BRAND (No. 757)



Our son, Connor, was bilaterally implanted at 14 months of age. Everything happened very quickly for us as he was diagnosed, implanted and switched on - all in just six weeks. This month we are celebrating Connor's one "hear" birthday, and what a journey it has been. It is a privilege to walk this road with our little Superhearo.

Connor's ears are not just his cochlear implants. His ears are his brain development devices, it helps him to listen, speak and communicate. It gives him access to music and conversation, it allows him to laugh, play and have friends. It is his path to a bright future, they are his miracle ears. Today, a year later, and we still find ourselves amazed at things most people take for granted. When he turns toward the sound of his name, his smile when he hears a familiar voice, when he gets a fright, when he answers to a whisper, when he identifies different sounds coming from outside, when he sings a familiar song, when he learns and says a new sound. These magic moments make all the tears, worry and uncertainty worthwhile. Today Connor calls himself "Connor Superman Brand" - and rightly so!

MARGOT MOOLMAN (No. 758)



I received my Cochlear Implant in November 2018. The initial switch-on was quite worrying because there was a lot of white noise and background noise. Everyone's voices sounded like chipmunks and was those high-pitched cartoon character voices. I was really worried and wondered how I was going to get used to it. My

own voice was also completely distorted. But three days later my own voice sounded almost normal and interestingly my GPS sounded the same as always.

After the second mapping the chipmunks had stopped and my brain seemed to have adjusted to a large extent. I could hear clearly in a quiet environment but a noisy environment was still a challenge. Telephone conversation was still a long way off.

Now almost a year has passed since I went "on the air" my cochlear implant is by far the stronger hearing ear and I often find myself switching my hearing aid off because the sound is distorted. I noticed that the cochlear implant adjusts to loud and harsh sounds so I never get an overload of noise on that side. Looking back I simply don't know how I functioned in a work environment before my implant. I have become so much more

confident and outgoing. There are still a few things that need to be sorted out. I still avoid telephone conversations wherever possible. And when listening to music I prefer men with deeper voices singing. I still find women's voices irritating and too high pitched to hear properly.

ZANELE DYWILE (No. 761)



Zanele was pronouncing words incorrectly and we thought it's because she was only 5 years. The organisation called IKAM-VA, asked the school principal to make a list of learners who have a hearing problem or may need speech therapy. She was selected and had to attend appointments at Khayelitsha Day Hospital. Zanele was referred to Tygerberg Hospital where

they said she cannot hear some of the sounds and is the reason she could not pronounce some words. It was explained to me that an implant would help her hearing. She underwent further assessments and it was decided that she should be implanted. They switched her cochlear implant on and it was a great success. There has been a huge improvement in her pronunciation of words and I feel she is able to hear a lot better.

MARGARET GLOVER (No. 762)



I am a 74-year-old lady who have had a hearing problem since birth that was never diagnosed. At the age of 42 I started using hearing aids and had to lip-read.

On hearing a date had been set for my cochlear implant operation I was very excited. My surgery was on the 22nd October 2018, and it was activated on 30th November 2018. I had difficulty adjusting to the way it sounded as I was so used to lip-read-

ing. My expectation was to hear once the cochlear implant was activated. I had to get used to the different sounds, the buzzing noises and the echoes. Now I am so used to the implant that I am not aware of it. I still battle when there is a lot of background sounds, e.g. in restaurants with air-conditioning or sitting in the back seat of a car, and when there is loud music.

Getting used to the cochlear implant has been a process: Hearing my grandchild calling me from another room. Walking in the road and hearing a car from behind me. Hearing a kettle boiling and the alarm going off, and someone talking behind me. My hearing is still improving with patience and concentration. I am thankful for the the opportunity of having the cochlear implant to hear and being able to communicate better. It has definitely made a big difference in my life.

ANEBEL DU PREEZ (No. 764)



Anebel is een ongelooflike dogtertjie wat verskriklik geseënd is. Sy is op 10 weke gediagnoseer met hartversaking, brongioliëtes en 'n hart verwandte kondisie.. Sy het 'n hart operasie ondergaan op 12 weke. Die dokters het ons altyd voorberei dat sy weens omstandighede vorderings gewys, agter is. In die begin van 2018 het ons uitgevind dat

Anebel 'n uitermatige gehoorverlies het. Na sy eers gepas was met gehoorapperate het ons uitgevind dat sy die beste sal baat by 'n kogleêre inplanting. Dit is ongelooflik om die vordering te sien van waar sy was tot en met nou. Dit is glad nie n maklike pad of 'n "quick fix" nie maar elke tree was definitief die moeite werd gewees.

SHELLEY VIRANYI (No. 765)



I was born hard of hearing due to a genetic condition called Usher's Syndrome.

It was only when I was five years old that my hearing loss was discovered. I attended the Mary Kihn School for hearing impaired children for my first year of school. I managed well there and attended mainstream school from the age of eight. I graduated from Cape Peninsula University of Technol-

ogy as a Medical Technologist in 1988 and worked at Groote Schuur Hospital for 12 years. Over the years my hearing deteriorated further and by the time I was fifty, I was relying largely on visual cues and lip-reading for communication. My current work as a reflexologist proved to be perfect as one-on-one conversations were all that I could manage. In 2018, I discovered that I was a candidate for a cochlear implant. My operation and subsequent switch-on took place at the end of 2018. Thus I received the gift of hearing a full range of sounds especially in the higher frequency range needed for hearing speech. I have loved this journey of integrating into the hearing world. I can now attend meetings and follow most of what is being said. Everyday conversations are so much easier. My family members needed to adapt to talking to me without me relying on lip-reading, for example when it is dark or when I am in another room! I am appreciating sounds such as the sizzling from a frying pan, the chirping of birds by day and crickets by night. I now know that sounds like the ticking of a clock or car indicator, the beeping of electronic appliances and footsteps on our wooden floors are not only fascinating but also give me useful information about the world around me.

ZIAN LOUBSER (No. 766) and ZETA LOUBSER (No. 767)



Zian and Zeta were born at 34 weeks with low birth weight and premature. I noticed at the age of one year that they did not respond to their names.

I took them to the clinic and was told nothing was wrong with them. I then took them to a doctor and was also told the same story to not be worried, nothing is wrong with them. I even took them to a pediatrician, she come up with the same story but she will refer them to an Audiologist when they are 1 year and six months for a hearing test if I still feel it is necessary. I waited another few days and went back to the clinic and the sister gave me a letter for Red Cross Hospital for them to be seen and to give me peace of mind and that there is nothing wrong with my children.

At Red Cross Hospital a few tests were done on both of them and then came the news: "mommy both your children have a profound hearing loss". It came as a total shock; I can't even explain how I felt that day, devastated, heartbroken, numb, I couldn't even get words out. At 1 year and 6 months they were fitted with hearing aids, but the hearing aids didn't help. They then referred us to Tygerberg Hospital Cochlear Implant Unit. As soon as I heard that there is a chance that they will be able to speak with the cochlear implant I said yes! On the 9th of January 2019 they were switched-on. What an amazing experience to see how they responded when they heard for the first time.

In July 2019 it was decided that they are ready for school. I was excited, sad and heartbroken at the same time, because I had to leave everything behind in Mamre, my older daughter, my work and the rest of the family and start a new journey at Carel Du Toit school. Today I don't look back, not for one day. It is going very well with them and I am proud to say that they have been hearing for 9 months now.

KRISTIE GOSLETT (No. 768)



Kristie se ore was elke jaar 'n probleem tydens die winter. Haar eerste groot operasie was in haar graad 7 jaar. Twee jaar later is 'n verdere operasie gedoen wat baie suksesvol was. Haar graad 10 jaar was sy 'n uitruilstudent. Kort na haar terugkeer uit die buiteland het sy eendag langs haar

ma in die kombuis gestaan en gesels. Sy het moeilik gehoor en 'n paar keer gesê sy kan nie hoor nie. Dit was ons eerste gewaarwording dat haar gehoor nie normaal is nie. Op skool het sy baie meer energie in haar kunsvakke gesit wat persoonlike konsentrasie vereis. Vakke waar luistervaardighede van belang is se prestasie het gesak. Kristie het 'n negatiewe tendens in haar punte op skool ervaar.

'n Oudioloog het die gehoortoetse gedoen en bevestig dat haar gehoor baie beperk is en 'n kogleêre inplanting is aanbeveel.

Die kogleêre inplanting se effek op haar lewe was onmiddellik. Vanaf die aanskakeling van die apparaat was daar 'n positiewe verandering. Klanke was vir haar nie normaal nie. Mense het soos "chipmunks" geklink. Op pad na die motor was daar baie nuwe klanke wat sy baie lanklaas gehoor het. Haar selfoon se knoppie maak 'n klikgeluid, voorheen was daar niks nie. Selfs die geluid om te snuif was nuut. Die flikkerlig van die motor se klik-klik, die agtergrond gedruis van die stad – alles nuut.

Hierdie jaar is haar matriek jaar. Op skool is daar steeds klanke wat te veel is wat sy uitsluit deur die apparaat af te skakel tydens toetse en eksamens. Penne wat val, stoele wat rondskuif, algemene klasgeluide. Die kogleêre inplanting stel haar nou in staat om 'n normale lewe te hê wat enige horende persoon het. Sonder hierdie tegnologie en die kundigheid van al die personeel betrokke sou dit nie vir haar moontlik gewees het nie..

LORITA CAMARA (No. 769)



I am almost 40 years old. I have used hearing aids for as long as I can remember.

My husband had his cochlear implant done 4 years ago and was extremely happy and although I, too, was happy for him I was totally against having one done for myself. I am not sure why I was

against it. My husband encouraged me to go for an assessment, but I was stubborn and decided it was definitely not for me. My husband never gave up and continued to try and convince me but no, I had my mind made up!

As the years went by I realised that I was slowly starting to lose my hearing. It also dawned on me that I was losing out a lot in life but especially with my kids. This became the turnaround point in my life and the decision to have the cochlear implant. It was the best decision I have made and I can kick myself for not doing it sooner.

At the beginning, after the operation, I was of the impression that I would immediately begin to hear better but that was not the case. It took time and the whole process taught me to be patient with myself; a much needed trait when having the implant done. It is still, however, taking time and I am into my 8th month now since the activation. I am pleased to say that my hearing has advanced and I am able to hear sounds that I would otherwise not have been able to hear previously. Sounds that stand out for me, are the 'f'; 's'; far distance sounds and also loud chirping of birds. It is still a process. I am not where I would like to be but I am not where I used to be.

ELRENA STADLER (No. 770)



"Answer the phone please" was the first words that alerted me that there was something amiss with my hearing. This was back in 2011. The phone was right next to me and I did not hear it ring.

I consequently went for some hearing tests and eventually ended up being issued a hearing aid from Tygerberg Hospital. All sounds were just louder

with the hearing aid and it helped me for a while.

My hearing deteriorated over time and understanding speech was getting increasingly difficult. We thought that perhaps I may need more advanced hearing aids. A friend saw an advertisement in the Constantiaberg Medical Newsletter for two 2nd hand hearing aids being sold by someone that had received a cochlear implant and they were no longer needed. So off we went to meet up with none other than Guy Middleton. He is No. 614 on your cochlear implant records. I had the hearing aids "tuned" in for my own use but my audiologist referred me to Tygerberg Hospital Cochlear Implant Unit.

After almost a year of deliberations, I received my implant in December 2018. I was "switched on" in January 2019. Oh my word – buzzing of bees and Micky Mouse voices. I went home and all my dogs sounded like tiny little yappers. My dogs are large dogs! I could not decipher anything. Everything was amplified but sounded totally foreign and very metallic; somewhat like an electronic robot. I was extremely frustrated, as I thought that I would immediately be able to hear normally again.

Now, eight months later and I am feeling on top of the world!! I can watch TV and understand the programs without always having to read the subtitles! I can differentiate between which of my dogs are barking. I can understand my partner, without lip-reading. I can hear the birds chirping, noisy little fellas. I can now hear the phone ringing from the next room, my shower water running, the indicator in my car ticking! It is very seldom that I have to ask someone to repeat him or herself. Understanding speech has become so much easier and I am almost back to normal in understanding what people are saying.

BERNADINE FORTUNE (No. 771)



For the past 18 years, I had a hearing loss in my right ear and this made me dependent on my left ear. In 2015, I was fitted with a hearing aid on my left ear and have been using it every day since. My hearing loss impacted me negatively and led me into depression that I was formally diagnosed with. I was treated with medication for my depression and became an introvert, no longer wanting to socialise

with anyone. In 2018 I was told I was a candidate for a cochlear implant. I was sceptical at first and was not sure whether this would be the solution to my hearing loss, I however took the leap of faith and went ahead with the implant.

Since the switch-on, my life has changed in a big way. I feel more confident and enjoy being in the company of other people again and I go out more often. I can interact with others without feeling left out.

REESE ESTERHUIZEN (No. 772)



In January 2017, Reese was referred for an ABR test and it revealed that she had a permanent hearing loss. Our hearts were broken and we felt hopeless. She received hearing aids in February 2017. Our family had a short vacation and when we returned in May 2018 our daughter woke up not being able to hear us. We rushed her

to Tygerberg Hospital; the doctor injected steroids into her ear and her hearing came back but very slowly. She was referred to the genetics department and they discovered she had enlarged vestibular aquaducts (EVAS). November 2018 she lost her hearing again, it was decided that she was a candidate for a cochlear implant. On the 28th of January 2019, Reese had her cochlear implant operation and soon after her switch on. Reese is doing so well and will progress to grade 1 next year. She has no limits and loves learning new words we are so proud of. Our angel is a little adventurer and always a happy chappy, we know she will go far in life

FRANS BOTHA (No. 773)



My journey starts in 1999, when I realised that I was experiencing difficulty hearing. It was time to get my first hearing aids. In 2018, my hearing progressed to a point where there were no hearing aids powerful enough for my hearing loss. It came as a surprise to me when a cochlear implant was suggested. What never ceases to amaze me is the brain's ability to adapt as

my loss increased. I was still coping in a busy work environment with many Skype calls and meetings daily. Provided I knew the topic or was given an agenda of the meeting, I managed without making too much of a fool of myself. The problem became evident if the meeting or conversation went off topic. This resulted in a delay of my responses while my brain tried to work out what the topic was. The inevitable happened and one slowly starts to avoid gatherings where one is required to provide input. Simple things like responding to a waiter's questions in a restaurant became a challenge. Family and friend gathering become difficult and frustrating. Funny witty comments were always missed.

The appointments and tests to determine if I was a candidate for an implant to the switch-on took approximately 8 months. So if you are a prospective recipient, be prepared to be patient.

I had done some research in order to ease my expectations when the implant was switched on, it was not a surprise when I heard the first tinny, Mickey Mouse voice sounds. Everyone is different and I would call my experience as normal. Within a few days I could make out words. Within a month I could follow speech. Although by no means perfect my speech perception has improved dramatically. My pre-implant speech test result was about 10%. Six months on my speech perception was 90%. Interestingly, although I feel that I am missing out a lot on what is happening around me, my family and friends say there has been a marked improvement in my participation in conversations. I have also noticed that I do not get so anxious when I have to go out and meet people.

PETER KNIGHT (No. 776)



Been There, Done That and got the Backpack.

2002 hearing aids, 2010 a new set of hearing aids. 2019 Cochlear Implant. What a difference! First few weeks I listened to audio books for hours. I tested myself using an App called Angel. I listened to Hope Notes and IMAP. Six months down the line it's a different world.

The birds sing in the garden, I talk to my wife, I answer the phone. Talked to my son for half an hour on my birthday, first time in years. I can talk to shop attendants and I listen to music all the time. Is it perfect ?? No but it's getting better all the time. I'm beginning to recognize the singers. Still some way to go but I'm going to carry on challenging this device. For those who are starting out the more effort you put in the more enjoyment you will get out. Even if it is going slowly I'm sure it will get better. I keep noticing small differences. I have talked to people who keep training after 5 years. I'd like to wish all you on this amazing journey lots of success.

MICHAEL PILLAY (No. 778)



On the 31st October 2017, Michael was born. Taken to the Stork Room to bond, Michael was cleaned before being handed to his father. Within 90 seconds of holding him, the nurse took Michael away, because he had difficulty breathing. They struggled to normalise his breathing rate. But Michael's

battle was only starting. Soon after that, Michael was taken away by the specialist. Michael had a clot in one valve of the heart, the MRI scan showed an irregularity in the brain, he could not keep food down, his breathing was way off, a sacral dimple was found and his hearing was below par. At the end of Michael's 10 day stay in ICU, he came home. Most of the issues were cleared

and the bills had now almost exhausted our savings, pension fund and medical aid but we were just so happy to have our son come home.

We came to find that Michael has severe to profound hearing loss and was fitted with hearing aids but we were forewarned, they offered no sense of hearing. Michael has since had cochlear implant surgery and is well on his journey to enjoying favourable quality of life. In four weeks from today, Michael will hear his first birthday song as he turns two.

NITHAAR SOLOMONS (No. 779)



Just before Nithaar turned 2 years of age, he went for his regular check-up at the clinic when he was referred to Red Cross Hospital and Carel Du Toit Center. He was diagnosed with a profound hearing loss. The news was unbelievable and hard for the family to accept. In November 2018 he received

hearing aids but did not receive any benefit from them and a cochlear implant was recommended. In February 2019 he had his operation and in March 2019, he had his switch-on. Six months has past and there has been a lot of improvement. A cochlear implant is truly a miracle! is now able to say a few words and responds to sounds around him. He is currently attending the Carel Du Toit school and speech therapy sessions. He does need a second implant soon and we are trying to fund raise for him, as it is very expensive. He is a very enthusiastic boy and we are sure with his potential he will have a successful future. Thank you to the Cochlear Implant team for making it possible for the deaf to hear.

VANESSA SKORS (No. 780)



In 2008 when I was 38 years old, I became deaf in my right ear over night. I was fitted with a hearing aid on my left ear. I then got very sick in 2016 and was diagnosed with idiopathic hypotension. I decided to resign from work.

Fast forward to 2019, at the age of 49 I noticed I was struggling significantly with hearing on my

left side. I saw my audiologist who confirmed my hearing loss in my left ear. A cochlear implant was recommended.

I'm a strange person with strange beliefs who believes in not changing the course of life. After sitting for 4 days in absolute silence my thinking changed to if something can be done then go for it, as it was a very silent world. I decided to go ahead with a cochlear implant.

The cochlear implant surgery day was on the 6th of March 2019. My hearing loss could be genetically related as my sister Laurie has a profound hearing loss and has a cochlear implant. Everyone was supportive and understanding. I am forever grateful that I can hear once again. It does sound a bit different to the sound that I can remember. Without the processor I am pro-

foundly deaf. One benefit is that I always have good night sleeps. Vanessa Skors - Aka Bionic Woman

CHRISTELLE VAN ROOI (No. 788)



In my graad 7 jaar het ek permanent my gehoor verloor. Baie dinge het verander in my lewe. Ek was al dowe leerder by Ceres Sekondêre Hoërskool, maar die feit dat ek doof was het my nie terug gehou, om my skool loopbaan te voltooi nie. Op 23 Mei 2019 het ek 'n kogleêre inplanting ontvang. Ek kan nie my gevoelens

beskryf op die dag van die aanskakeling nie. Trane van blydschap het gevloei toe ek na soveel jare weer my eie stem kon hoor. Ek het my inplanting nou vir 5 maande, en dit is steeds 'n wonderwerk om te kan hoor.

PAYTON STANFLIET (No. 791)



Payton was born on the 28th May 2018 at Worcester medi-clinic. On the second day Payton developed jaundice and on the fourth day she had heart failure. A blood transfusion was needed and after 9 days she was discharged from the hospital. I discovered at 9 months, Payton was not reaching her age appropriate milestones. The pediatrician referred her for a hearing assessment and sent her for a MRI scans

as they suspected that she might have a hearing problem.

Our audiologist confirmed our biggest fear. It was a big shock to be told our daughter is unable to hear. Payton was deaf in both ears, which was caused by the jaundice. In March 2019 she received hearing aids and we told that she is a candidate for a cochlear implant. On the 10th June 2019 Payton received implants in both ears. On 23rd of July 2019, little Payton's life changed forever. At that time she was only 14 months old. Her switch on was a very emotional day for the family.

Payton attends Carel Du Toit centre. She receives a lot of extra support. It is still a big adjustment for Payton as she has only been an active user for 2 months. We take each day as it comes. As a family we are very fortunate to be part of the cochlear implant family.

PEACE ALONYI (No. 792)

Peace was diagnosed with meningitis at 10 months of age. She was able to say papa, mama, baba and responded to her name. 16 months later I was worried because she did not improve in words and wasn't responding when we called her. After the hearing test at the Carel du Toit Center, I was sadly informed



SHIRLEY BESTER (No. 795)



that my little angel had a sudden hearing loss and was now profoundly deaf. She was given hearing aids, but unfortunately it didn't help her. My wish was to give my baby a chance to hear and to be able to talk to her two siblings. On 12 June 2019 the operation was very successful as expected. Her switch was 9 July 2019 and on the 4th of September, Peace Victoria surprised us by saying

bye-bye, come and one. Peace is not responding perfectly to her name yet, but she responds to voices around her. She follows some instructions and she is using her voice much more.

In 2014, I accepted what my family and work colleagues were telling me that I was struggling with my hearing. Working as an aftercare primary school teacher, I noticed that I was struggling to hear the children and was unable to hear their questions.

It was confirmed by an audiologist that I needed a left hearing aid (at first).

A year later a right hearing aid was needed. During this time, I trained myself to lip-read. After four years of faking, smiling a lot, nodding in agreement, not hearing correctly the questions the school head sent me for a hearing assessment. It was confirmed I had minimal hearing with the left ear most affected.

The school decided to not renew my contract for 2019. The audiologist empathised with my situation and referred me to Tygerberg Cochlear Department. Since January 2019 I underwent all tests relating to my suitability for an implant. On the 29th of July 2019 I underwent the surgery. Almost immediately on being programmed a new and wonderful world of hearing opened up to me. Initially it was overwhelming, scary and nothing sounded familiar to me. But, the relationship with my family improved drastically, and we all rebounded and underwent my new journey of hearing together. I relied on using Whatsapp to communicate, but now I am able to hear Voice Notes and don't need to lip-read as much as before. The best gift of all was to hear TV shows and not rely on reading subtitles. They gave me the gift of hearing again and the feeling of being alive after 20 years of silence, heartache and acceptance of my deaf conditions. I am improving daily in distinguishing sounds. I now feel safe enough to commute on public transport unaccompanied, enjoy socialising again and meeting new people, knowing I can hold my end up in conversation due to being able now to hear again.

JACQUES VAN DEVENTER (No. 798)



Ek het 2 jaar gewag vir 'n kogleêre inplanting. Nadat ek geïmplanteer was, het ek die klanke aan die begin vreemd gevind, maar het later gewoon geraak daaraan.

Ek kon die voëltjies hoor tjirp en ek kon gaan fliek, wat ek baie geniet het. Ek kan TV kyk, en verstaan die klanke baie beter. Voorheen kon ek nie al die woorde hoor nie.

Ek het van oor tot oor gelag

end it baie geniet. Ek is 55 jaar oud, en om te kan hoor is 'n droom wat waar geword het. Ek beveel dit vir enige iemand aan.

FATIMA PETERS (No. 799)



I was diagnosed with bilateral hearing loss due to Meniere's disease in 2008 and was accepted as a candidate for bilateral cochlear implants in 2019 after hearing aids proved ineffective for me.

After my cochlear surgery I was very sick, and took a little longer to recover than expected. After my

switch on, I did not find the "happily ever after" I expected, as portrayed in many Youtube videos. The sound was artificial and robotic. I suddenly heard more but was unable to identify what I was hearing. Nothing sounded "normal." My greatest disappointment was that music sounded hollow and flat. My main form of exercise is Zumba that rely heavily on being able to follow the beat and the rhythm of the song. This was lost in my right ear. I felt disappointed and disheartened. I allowed myself to feel like this for a few days and then I forced myself to fight these feelings and give this new attempt to "break the silence" the best fight I can.

Once I stopped focussing on the negatives, I started noticing the positive changes since my switch on. A major achievement was being able to follow meetings without assistance and although people sounded like robots, I heard what they were saying and could participate constructively. I can now even join in with some of the small talk before and after meetings! I do not feel so isolated anymore. I resumed my Zumba classes despite the poor quality of my hearing.

The more I expose myself to the wonderful world of hearing the easier it gets and the more my self-confidence grows. Having endured these challenges has enriched my life in so many ways. It has increased my ability to persevere, has improved my patience, granted me deeper empathy (my own struggles has taught me so much about what others must be feeling and experiencing) and a richer appreciation of the little things in life.

COCHLEAR IMPLANT UNIT CELEBRATES MILESTONE: 800TH RECIPIENT IMPLANT

KAMVA NTLEBI (No. 800)



Kamva Ntlebi was born a happy healthy baby in 2005. However at the age of only six weeks he contracted meningitis that resulted in a permanent hearing loss. With limited access to audiology services in Queenstown, Kamva's hearing was not tested. Kamva was 18 months old, when his mother, Neliswa noticed a hearing loss and confirmed by an audiologist. He was fitted with hearing aids. Within the last couple of years, despite fitting the best hearing aids available, Kamva's academic performance and his ability to interact socially began to suffer due to his hearing loss. His local ENT, Dr Paul Steyn, referred Kamva to the Tygerberg Hospital Cochlear Implant Unit. The East London Satellite Unit based at Frere Hospital, East London met with Kamva, Neliswa and his dad, Kwanele, in June 2019 when he was found to be an excellent cochlear implant candidate. Kamva's family travelled to Cape Town from Queenstown, Eastern Cape for his surgery with Dr Gary Kroukamp (ENT surgeon) on the 6th of September. We eagerly await his initial activation and his aural rehabilitation journey.

2019 GLOBAL AG BELL SYMPOSIUM – MADRID, SPAIN

Barbara Kellett and Jenni Bester were privileged to attend and present at the first ever global symposium for Listening and Spoken Language hosted by AG Bell in Madrid, Spain from 30 June 2019 – 2 July 2019. As with all international conferences the opportunity to connect with and learn from a global community of like-minded professionals is an enriching experience and it was wonderful to meet up with both known and new colleagues.

Jenni Bester presented the work done on developing a pre-operative communication profile for paediatric cochlear implant candidates. The presentation was well received and some positive comments were given after the presentation. Donald Goldberg, a previous board member of AG Bell commended



the work done and noted the importance of highlighting the red flags inherent in the child pre-cochlear implantation. Barbara Kellett shared South Africa's journey in building sustainable listening and spoken language training programs in emerging contexts. This presentation was also extremely well received with some more key people present to listen and learn about the additional training being done here. Dimity Dornan from Hear and Say in Australia was very complimentary - highlighting the similarities with her therapy journey and encouraging research to support policy change. Sherri Fickensher from Clarke Schools in the US and also currently on the AG Bell board became emotional while commenting about the presentation: She was moved by how much has been put in place in South Africa by a committed core group in the absence of accredited auditory verbal therapists. Both therapists returned motivated to share their experience and even more committed to obtaining auditory verbal certification in 2020.

DEAF AWARENESS MONTH



Left: Hannah Roopen (No 420)

Right: Mrs Deaf SA 2018 Tracey Duncan (No 587)

On the 4th of September, Hannah represented St Georges Grammar School at a Silent Business Breakfast event in Celebration of Deaf Awareness Month.

MISS DEAF SOUTH AFRICA



Over the years many of the Tygerberg Hospital – Stellenbosch University Cochlear Implant Unit recipients have participated, been finalists and been crowned in the Miss, Mrs and Mr. Deaf SA pageant.

Congratulations to Marisa Smit (No 247) who was crowned Miss Deaf South Africa 2019.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MARK ROACH (No. 257)

Mark represented South Africa at the Deaf world swimming championships held August 2019 in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Congratulations for making South Africa proud. He received his cochlear implants in 1998 and 2004. Mark had the following to say:

"I had the honour of representing South Africa at the Deaf world swimming championships held in Sao Paulo, Brazil in August. I was stoked with 5 finals out of 6 races with 5th being my best placing in the 100m butterfly. Training for this event was hectic, attending 8 to 10 times a week totalling an average of 70km a week. The training was insane, my coach, Csanad Feldhauz and the squad at Aquasharks Academy kept me hungry to qualify and succeed at this event. This was my 5th international and I am uncertain about the future of my swimming career as I have begun my work career after graduating at the Animation School last year".

CONGRATULATIONS TO DANIËL MEYER (No. 257)

Daniël recently participated in the SA National Gymnastics competition. He did very well his results were as follows:

1st - Gold on rings – Basic Champion

3rd - Bronze on floor **3rd** - Bronze on jumps

3rd - Bronze – Overall position - Men's Artistic Gymnast L8

3rd - Bronze - Overall Position - Men's Tumble

Daniël received his cochlear implants at 11 and 14 months of age.



TWO OCEANS MARATHON FUND RAISER FOR HEAR US

A huge thank you and congratulations to all those that took part in the Two Oceans Marathon and helped fund-raise a total of R64106 towards the Hear Us foundation. They are already planning to do the same next year and involve more participants to fundraise for Hear Us. If you are interested in joining them next year you can contact Ashleigh Bredeveltdt at a.bredeveltdt90@hotmail.com



WHATSAPP / TELEGRAM / SMS NUMBER: 076 387 7227

Remember to use our WhatsApp/Telegram/ SMS line to contact your audiologist.

- ✓ Please remember to always say who you are, who your audiologist is and why you are contacting us.
- ✓ This phone is not manned all day and we will respond as quickly as possible to your messages.
- ✓ This number can *only* receive SMS/ WhatsApp messages, you *cannot* call this number.
- ✓ Only in use on weekdays during work hours only, not in use on weekends/ public holidays.