

COCHLEAR IMPLANT UNIT KOGLEËRE INPLANTINGSEENHEID TYGERBERG HOSPITAAL



NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2021 | NUUSBRIEF DESEMBER 2021



2020 was a year we are unlikely to ever forget. Along with the rest of the world our Cochlear Implant Unit was thrown into uncharted territory in March 2020. We found ourselves in a pandemic and a hard lockdown trying to find a way forward to continue to care for our patients, despite the movement restrictions and accessing the hospital, as well as the health risks of engaging with each other.

With travel permits in hand we returned to the hospital during Level 5 lockdown. From writing letters for patients to travel to us, creating a drop off/pick up and go service (outside Entrance 1 of Tygerberg Hospital), trouble-shooting faulty equipment via WhatsApp video or Zoom calls, to conducting pre-op counselling sessions online and using transparent face masks to assist with lip-reading, we soon realised that helping people to hear could and had to go on. Vulnerable or nervous patients were seen offsite at a block of flats. The activation of one baby's cochlear implants even took place in one of the audiologists' homes!

We adjusted to the waves of the pandemic, and challenges of reduced theatre time and scan slots as each wave peaked. Some surgeries moved to day hospitals when our usual hospitals could not accommodate implant surgeries. We made last minute changes when patients or colleagues suddenly needed to isolate due to testing positive or being exposed to Covid. Despite the challenges we still managed to implant 44 ears last year and saw all who needed assistance with their cochlear implants.

Although the pandemic and its subsequent lockdowns brought uncountable personal loss and economic devastation, it also highlighted the importance of being able to communicate with those nearest and dearest to you. In keeping our focus on trying to assist people to hear better, despite the challenges 2020 presented us with, we hope to have eased our patients' difficulties and facilitated better communication within families and between friends.

Because of what the year 2020 brought to our lives we did not have our annual end of year get together function and did not publish a newsletter. Hopefully we will be able to meet at the end of 2022 to celebrate again. This year we do have a long-awaited newsletter.

The stories below are excerpts from our patients and parents' stories – their full stories are kept together with their photographs in an album at the Cochlear Implant Unit. All the recipients expressed their heartfelt thanks to family, friends and the

Tygerberg Hospital CI surgeons and audiologists for the support and guidance they received. Many also gave thanks to God.

Hieronder is verkorte weergawes van die stories van ons inplant gebruikers en hul ouers. Die volledige stories en 'n foto is beskikbaar in die foto-album by die Kogleëre Inplantingsseenheid. Al die pasiënte het hul families, vriende en die Tygerberg Hospitaal KI sjirurge en oudioloë bedank vir die ondersteuning en leiding wat hulle ontvang het. Baie het ook alle eer aan God gegee.

PETER KNIGHT (No 776)



Double Trouble Two Implants.

March 2018, my first implant in time for my 80th birthday. Very successful. Lots of listening to audio books, the budgies disappeared after 3 weeks and on my birthday, I had the first conversation in years with my son over the phone.

My real goal was to be able to listen to music again. Using a good set of headphones I was able to enjoy piano straight away.

There was enough residual hearing in my left ear to enjoy some quite complex pieces. During the next year my right ear was improving, and more instruments were sounding as I remembered. Still had big problems with tenor and female pop singers. A year later speech understanding still improving, and I could hear the news with the mini-mic. Then I did some tests on my left ear and found that had become almost useless.

Time for Implant number 2.

So almost to the day 2 years later No 2 was activated. The good news was that I could understand speech straight away, but different from the right ear. The voices were higher pitched and gravelly especially female voices.

The other fantastic news was with bilateral implants, it is a different, amazing world of sound. The right ear compensates for the left ear distortions. I listen to TV news and understand it most of the time. Music listening improved dramatically. It's now 5 months after the second implant and I'm still listening daily to audio books and most of the TV shows, left ear only to practice. The gravelly sound is still there but getting better. So, My Double Trouble is Re-Training My Brain, but I can tell you it has been worth every minute. Most of the time I am back to normal.

KARLI REYNECKE (No 787)



Karli se ouers het met toenemende kommer na haar geboorte opgelet dat sy nie reageer op die harde geblaf van die honde of enige harde geluide nie. Ons het die ergste gevrees, en haar gehoor laat toets. En daar is bevestig dat Karli doof is. Op die ouderdom van twee maande het Karli klein, pienk gehoorapparate gekry. Van daardie dag af skitter haar oë as sy geluide hoor. Sy reageer op haar naam en

ander geluide rondom haar. Ons was dankbaar en trots daarop om getuies te wees van haar merkwaardige vermoë om in beide tale te kommunikeer. Karli word groot in 'n tweetalige-bimodale huis en is vanaf die ouderdom van twee jaar vlot in Gebaretaal.

Op 18 maande oud het Karli se gehoor verder verswak. Die pad vorentoe sou nie maklik wees as Dowe ouers nie: kogleêre inplanting is voorgestel. Dit is bevestig dat Karli 'n kandidaat vir inplantings is. Die groot dag vir die operasie het in Mei 2019 aangebreek.

Op 7 Junie 2019, is Karli se aparate aangeskakel. Karli se gesiggie het gestraal toe sy vir ons sê "Ek kan hoor!" 18 maande is verby sedert Karli se bilaterale inplantings gedoen is. Haar luistervaardighede en gesproke taal het gevorder tot die ouderdomsgeskikte vlak van horende kinders. As ons terugkyk op die honderde kilometers se ry Kaap toe, en terug, op al die harde werk en geduld, bly dit die moeite werd. Vandag sit Karli in 'n hoofstroomskool!

ZUKISWA MFUPHI (No 806)

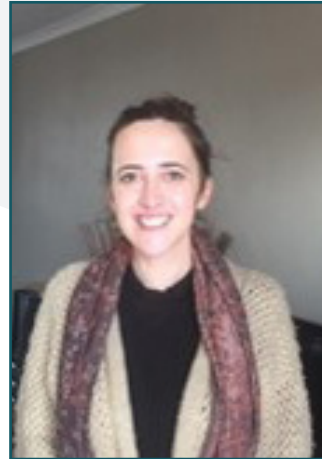


I was born with high frequency hearing loss, relied on lip reading for most my childhood years and eventually started wearing hearing aids on both ears as I got older. Two years ago, I started battling with vertigo which led me to an ENT who noticed that I was wearing hearing aids. From the tests he did he recommended that I consider a cochlear implant and that was the beginning of my journey. It's been two years since I got one for my right ear and the experience has been mind blowing and life changing. The

timing too has been perfect as with the latest way of working and virtual meetings I cannot begin to imagine how things would have been as it is still not an easy journey for those of us with hearing impairment.

There is a saying that says more blessed is the hand that gives than the one that receives. Forever grateful to all for making this dream of hearing better a reality.

LENÉ RETIEF (No 815)



I really hope my story will motivate and encourage others. When I was 8 years old my teacher noticed that I could not understand her without reading her lips. After tests and MRI etc it was confirmed that I had a sensori-neural hearing loss. After this I received my first BRIGHT pink hearing aids. Being in 4th grade and being the only girl in our school with hearing aids I was afraid of being different.

In high school I didn't want everybody to know about my hearing impairment as I wanted to be treated like a normal person. I'd been wearing my hearing aids 24/7 from grade 4 to 7. Whilst relying on lip-reading I went my whole high school without wearing hearing aids just to try and have a normal high school experience and being seen as a normal girl. Big mistake, because in matric my hearing deteriorated. As a university student I didn't want to be classified as disabled. I wanted to be normal. I've been an extrovert my whole life but being hearing impaired really impacted on me and I realized that I started to isolate myself more and withdrew from social settings

My family and friends encouraged me for two years to consider a cochlear implant. It turned out I was a suitable candidate. So, my journey with my cochlear implant has been life changing and I am so unbelievably grateful to start living my life to the fullest I've ever had.

One year later with a cochlear implant I can say it has been one of the best decisions of my life. I've relearned to hear so many things and I've rediscovered my confidence! I still struggle sometimes. I may still miss the punch line and certain parts in a conversation. I am so grateful for my CI.

Sharing this for my younger self struggling with isolation in the hearing world. Wish I could be sitting across the younger me and say "Lené allow yourself to recognize the need for cochlear implants, because you are so much more than your hearing loss".

MIA MEYNHARDT (No 818)



Mia was omtrent 2½ jaar oud toe ons haar gehoor laat toets het en uitgevind het dat sy 'n gehoorverlies het. Sy het aparate in April 2019 begin dra en het redelike gevorder, maar met die kogleêre inplanting wat sy in November 2019 gekry het, het sy baie vinniger gevorder. Sy praat nou baie mooi.

KYANA NANGO (No 823)



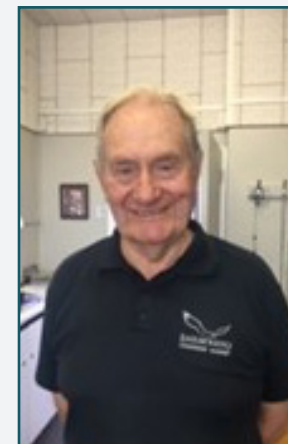
Kyana Sheira Nango is met normale gehoor gebore, maar het op 3 maande 'n hoë koors ontwikkel. In die Worcester Hospitaal word sy gediagnoseer met meningitis.

Die oudioloog van Worcester Hospitaal het na 'n toets op Kyana bevestig dat sy 'n uitermatige gehoorverlies in beide ore

het. Alles het vir ons in 'n oogwink verander, een oomblik kon Kyana hoor en toe was daar sprake van 'n operasie sodat sy weer kon hoor en praat wat ons gedink het ontmoontlik sou wees. She-Attel moes haar werk as kleuterskool onderwyseres opgee om voltyds na Kyana te kyk. Ons moes gereeld reis vanaf Worcester na Tygerberg Hospitaal.

Die oudioloog by Tygerberg Hospital was baie hulpsaam en ons het weer hoop gehad. Daarby moes ons ook leer hoe om met Kyana te kommunikeer, haar te verstaan, hoe sy ons verstaan en haar nie soos iemand met 'n gestremdheid te hanteer nie. By die CHAT sentrum het die spraakterapeut gehelp met haar spraak-en luisterontwikkeling en het ons ook van dag een af ondersteun. Ons kon nie vir beter behandeling gevra het nie. Kyana is normaal te danke aan die kogleêre inplanting en sy kan baie goed hoor en daar is selfs 'n paar woorde wat sy al kan sê.

PHILIP LE FEUVRE (No 826)



I am 85, the age when everything should be winding down. Well, yes, I now wear spectacles and one or two of my teeth are not those I had when I was young, but I have noticed very little change in the degree of activity in which I am involved. Hence the ability to hear was important to me. I began to wear hearing aids in my late sixties, but was conscious of increasing isolation, especially in a context of noise and chatter. My audiologist told me about a thing called a cochlear implant

and put me in touch with an implant audiologist at Tygerberg Hospital. After the explanation of what it was and what would be involved, my wife and I decided to go for it.

As I went through the preparatory process, I was enjoying the whole thing, even the operation. It was a source of fascination to me. On the day of the switch-on, I heard my audiologist with a clarity I had not known for years. I had been warned that I would need time to get used to it. I didn't. The channels that had slowly been blocking for years were suddenly opened. I still have a bit of difficulty with tunes and music, but the delight of personal interaction with other people was restored from the start. It is not so, I understand, for everyone, but when the restoration of hearing comes, what a gift it is!

NOSISA JOJO (No 827)



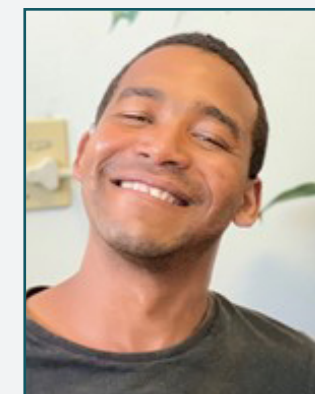
I am a 47-year-old office-based educator in OR Tambo Inland Education district in the Eastern Cape. I started experiencing tinnitus, dizziness, and fullness in my left ear in 2002. In 2008 my left ear stopped working. My right ear was working well until 2012 when I started feeling the same symptoms that were in my left ear. In 2013 it

was not easy for me at work as I struggled to hear people with soft voices. I started using a hearing aid, but it was not assisting me as my hearing was deteriorating day by day.

In 2017 June I had a severe dizziness attack, my neighbour took me to hospital where an ENT specialist diagnosed Menière's disease and told me that I am a cochlear implant candidate. I was afraid of the implant and started researching. I was supposed to go for the operation in 2018 but did not due to fear of the unknown.

On the 15th of February 2020 I went for the operation. COVID-19 and my medical aid delayed all the processes. It took 4 months before the activation could be done. On the 15th of June, my mother's birthday, the implant was activated, and I heard myself when I was singing for my mother. I will never forget that day in my life. My confidence is back now and I am no longer running away from attending work meetings.

HERSCHALL ARNOLDS (No 829)



I am 30 years of age. One year ago, in Bishop Lavis where I live something strange happened one morning. I just woke up and I couldn't hear anymore.

I started losing my balance. I was on my way to work that morning, when the sound went away, and I told my manager that something was wrong and I can't hear and she sent me home. I got to the day hospital

where they cleaned my ears, and in that time, I was experiencing nausea, sweating and lost my balance and felt like I was about to faint any second.

My hearing got worse when I realised that I have completely lost my hearing and it felt like I know nothing about what's happening around me, and my life was in danger. I got a letter to be transferred to Tygerberg. They found out that I have a left dead ear and a bit of hearing left in the right ear. I was operated on my right ear on the 24th of February 2020 and it was successful so when no one was walking with me God was walking with me on this journey of my life.

CHARLI WEINER (No 832)



No-one can prepare you for becoming a parent. You have some preconceived ideas from some reference points of your own upbringing and there are many experts and loads of literature available; but the truth is nothing can prepare you for this journey.

Charli was born on 15 October 2019. From the minute she was born that I

knew she was a real firecracker. I also had this intuition that there was something different about her. No other newborn was as alert and aware.

Charli was diagnosed with profound bilateral sensorineural hearing loss at 8 weeks old and our world turned upside down. I had never been in contact with a deaf person, I was so overwhelmed that it was extremely difficult to process. We were referred to the Tygerberg Hospital CI team and we were reassured that Charli was going to be just fine and that she was going to hear our voices. We started at the CHAT center in January 2020. Having a baby with profound hearing loss is a challenge but when she was 4 months old COVID hit and that added further complications. Luckily, we were able to fast track the process and Charli received her simultaneous bilateral cochlear implants on 28 April 2020. This was in the height of lockdown level 5, only one parent was allowed to take Charli to the hospital (so my husband had to wait anxiously at home). We also needed special permits for travelling on the highway and were stopped at numerous roadblocks.

Charli's "switch-on" occurred on the 21st of May 2020, at 7 months old, and since then she has been the biggest overachiever I have ever met. She said her 1st word the day after her 1st birthday and since then nothing and no one can stop her talking.

Now she is approaching her 2nd birthday and there is nothing stopping this feisty, determined yet sweet Charli. She is about to start playschool and it feels surreal that we have got to this point.

Every time Charli shouts for Mommy and Daddy, my entire being smiles and I just know that our Charli is destined for greatness thanks to the CI Unit's support and encouragement. It truly is the most remarkable journey, and it is just getting started.

SARAH KVALSIG (No 835)



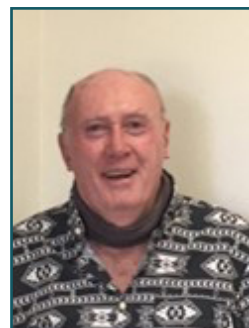
I was born hearing, but in my late twenties my hearing was deteriorating. My older sister had already suffered hearing loss so I might have expected to be told I had suffered a hearing loss. It was still a shock to hear the ENT specialist tell me I had a disability! I was a newly

qualified lawyer, and I had no idea how my career was going to be affected. My hearing remained stable for some years, and I could manage with hearing aids.

But by the time I was in my 40's, my hearing had worsened considerably, and work was becoming increasingly difficult and stressful. I was afraid to use my phone as I never knew if I would be able to understand the person on the other end. Social and work situations were a minefield and I avoided doing things I would otherwise have liked to do for fear of not managing. Even understanding my children was a struggle. Hearing loss is exhausting. My world was getting smaller, and I didn't want to lose out on all of these precious parts of my life. I was assessed as suitable for cochlear implants and had my left ear implanted in May 2020.

Because of COVID-19, I was alone at Tygerberg when the great day of my switch-on came. I hadn't had very high expectations up to that point but the switch-on was a revelation! I could suddenly hear what my audiologist was saying, even though she was speaking softly and from behind her plastic face-shield! In the days that followed, I realised just how much I had been missing out on, and now cannot even imagine being without my implant. It has made a difference in every aspect of my life: family, socializing with friends, and work.

FREDERIK SANSOM (No 838)



Sound travels! But if you travel without it many things which you used to do and want to do disappear. It was before my cochlear implant my son in London invited myself and my wife to his wedding, a great occasion but with many lessons for me. At the airport customs and immigration officials want to talk to you! At Heathrow airport more drama before we could be met by my family. During the following weeks I

could no longer talk much with my brothers and their wives and much pleasure was missed. I dreaded the wedding ceremony, which was just a few sounds, and meeting fellow guests. Its only now that I am able to enjoy people again thanks to my cochlear implant.

NOLA PRINSLOO (No 839)



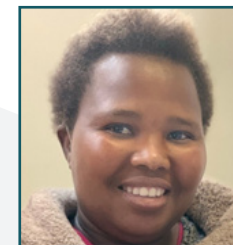
I have been very hard of hearing for over 30 years and have used hearing aids over these years. My hearing still deteriorated over the years and I struggled to hear and had to rely on lip-reading, which made communication with people very difficult, especially in groups of people.

I heard about the cochlear implant but was very apprehensive due to my age and the possible risk of "things going wrong" and ending up with no hearing at all. I spoke to a couple of

people who had the implant done and this gave me courage and belief in the procedure. They were so overjoyed about the improvement in their lives that I plucked up enough courage to go to the Cochlear Implant Unit at Tygerberg Hospital for tests. The test results showed that I was a suitable candidate and I decided to go ahead with the procedure.

The operation was a great success and from the moment the implant was "switched on" on 3 July 2020, my life changed completely! The sound is a bit different, but my brain soon adapted to the new sounds and the clarity of the sounds is just remarkable! I feel so blessed that I had the implant done and I now cannot imagine life without it.

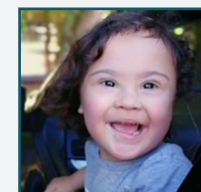
NONTHAHLA NGQANDU (No 843)



During 2017, I suddenly lost all my hearing after receiving ototoxic medication to treat my TB. I tried the strongest hearing aids available, yet it did not make a difference and lip-reading was impossible. I was struggling a lot and I could not do most of the things without asking someone to accompany me. Making use of public

transport was the most challenging for me. I was struggling to communicate with the taxi drivers and I always got dropped off at the wrong place or got into the wrong taxi. The most difficult time was in 2020, when everyone started wearing masks due to COVID. In September 2020, I was selected as a candidate for a cochlear implant and was given a second opportunity at hearing again. When my audiologist turned it on, it was very strange at first compared to the way I used to hear. As time went on, my hearing became more normal, and it is getting better. My life has changed completely! My hearing is better and clearer. I can clearly hear when taxi drivers ask me where they need to drop me off, even with a mask. I was able to retain my job, while several of my colleagues were retrenched at the end of 2020. I can now also talk on the phone again. My confidence, old bubbly personality and smile are back.

WYATT COLLISON (No 844)



All my life, I have dreamt of becoming a mother and when I learned that I was pregnant with Wyatt, I wanted to do everything possible to take the best care of my unborn child. I had no idea how my life was about to change!

May 2018 I was referred to GSH for detailed scans when there were concerns about Wyatt's nasal and femur growth; no diagnostic testing for Down Syndrome was given. January 08/01/19 Wyatt was born, and the diagnosis of Down Syndrome (Trisomy 21) was then confirmed. We soon accepted Wyatt's diagnosis and were prepared to walk this challenging journey not knowing what was next.

At 6 months we noticed Wyatt was not responding to any sounds and were referred to test his ears and the diagnosis of bilateral profound sensorineural hearing loss was made. When

Wyatt was about 12 months old, radiological scans determined hypoplastic nerves as well as malformation of the cochleae. Wyatt was fitted with bilateral hearing aids. The audiologist from Tygerberg Hospital CI Unit told us that due to Wyatt's malformed cochleae, hypoplastic nerves and diagnosis of Down Syndrome, the outcome with a cochlear implant was unpredictable.

His CI surgery (left ear) was on 11/09/2020 and his switch-on, on 20/10/2020 National Down Syndrome Day (Wyatt is the first Down Syndrome child implanted in South Africa).

Wyatt has been adjusting so well to wearing his KANSO 2 and knows that it is of great value to him. In July 2021 Wyatt started at the Carel du Toit school. We are truly proud of how Wyatt is developing and his resilience and willingness to adapt is inspiring and it encourages us daily to never let your DISABILITY define you, but your ABILITY to make that difference.

ZELDA LE ROUX (No 846)



I was under the impression that getting a cochlear implant would always be just a dream, but the dream became a reality in November 2020. I'm a computer programming educator where the ability to hear and communicate is integral in my working environment. As my hearing loss progressed it became increasingly

difficult and frustrating not being able to hear my colleagues and most importantly my students. Everything changed when I had the implant and when the sound processing device was activated. Today I'm able to hear my colleagues, my students, listen to music, take part in discussions when having meetings and conversations via cell phone.

MARGOT MALANDER (No 850)

26 October 2020....



At first, I was afraid to get the cochlear implant because I thought I might not be able to hear properly, after the implant. I went through some kind of trauma and complications, but they say everyone is different. My journey has been nothing but A-MAZING!!!

17 November 2020the day of my switch on. I could not believe what I was hearing, I burst out in tears, my two audiologists and my mother were there as well. I got to hear my very own voice, my mom's voice for the first time and it was very different to what I had heard since I had my hearing aids. All the crazy noises that I could not make out, the music and the footsteps. As time went, I got used to all the sounds and of course with all the support from my mom, my son, and my awesome audiologist. I could hear the birds chirping in the morning, the siren, children shouting, running and playing outside, my dog barking outside, people hooting in front of my house, my kid calling for me upstairs, hearing bath taps running, sounds of frying, which is this kind of sizzle and spattering of hot oil. The sounds of a plane flying, the indicators on my car flicking, the alarm beeping when someone opens the door.

Hearing someone talking with their masks on has been very difficult because I need to pick up the words so my brain can get used to it but it has been good so far because I do understand most of the people with their masks on.

I've been watching music videos on You Tube with subtitles so I can follow the words and started listening to all my favourite songs without subtitles and started singing in the car. I no longer need to lip-read people. Things takes time and there was no need for me to rush things.

MPHO DAYELE (No 855)



I am 49 years old. In 2014 I had to quit my teaching job because of my hearing loss, lack of support from the school and employees and communication difficulties with people. In 2015 I moved to Sasolburg to seek employment. I was given an opportunity at Malakabeng Intermediate School where I was given a second chance. I was able to purchase a hearing aid in the hope it would

benefit my hearing. Unfortunately, it was very hard working there, the teachers did not understand my disability. The hearing aid assisted a little, however, the audiologist at the time explained to me my hearing loss was so severe that it would only provide minimum benefit. Sadly, my contract was terminated after 3 months.

Since 2015 I have been struggling significantly. Hearing loss is really an invisible disability and with that comes a lot of challenges and misconceptions.

At the end of 2019 I was fortunate enough to be referred to the Cochlear Implant Unit at Tygerberg Hospital. I was found to be a suitable candidate and on 14 December my cochlear implant was switched on. On that day I knew that I was able to approach life differently in a positive light. I really appreciate the implant because I nearly got run over by cars several times. I'm now out of danger because now I can hear cars moving behind me. I'm able to communicate with family and friends and hope I will get my job back. If you have a problem like me, don't be scared to reach out for help.

CLIFFORD KROTZ (No 859)



Everyone has a good story to tell and I believe this is my good story. I am 66 years of age and fairly healthy. My hearing started failing more than 20 years ago and deteriorated rapidly: first my left ear where I could no longer use a hearing aid. Then I relied solely on my right hearing aid until about

3 years ago I completely lost the remaining hearing in that ear. I then approached the Cochlear Implant Unit at Tygerberg Hospital where I was treated with so much care, enthusiasm

and friendliness by their staff. I immediately felt hope rising in me. I finally received my cochlear implant this year and had my switch on a week later.

It was an amazing experience to be able to hear sounds I haven't heard for more than 20 years – like water running and hearing myself laughing. I can now watch TV and understand the story line. My friends and family can now talk to me without exerting themselves and I can respond in a normal manner. My audiologists are still working with me in getting my hearing to full capacity in the next few months. I have new hope in life.

RAMIN KAMIL (No 860)



Ramin at 18 months had already ticked most of his development milestones, all the milestones, except speech and response to sound which got us worried. His testing and diagnosis with profound bilateral hearing loss at 20 months left the whole family devastated.

His audiologist in Ghana recommended hearing aids which he got two weeks later, but we didn't see any marked difference. Cochlear implants were recommended but with the caution that it requires a lot of commitment, time and finances.

It is every parent's dream to see their children live their lives to the fullest and be happy and I imagine it would be the worst feeling not to be able to provide that for them. Finding out about the CI team at Tygerberg, CHAT Centre and Carel Du Toit is the one thing that gave us hope in a year of life's trials amidst COVID. We travelled to Cape Town in January 2021, upon further counselling and testing, Ramin was implanted on 25 January 2021 and switched-on on 29 January. This is the best decision we could have ever made to give Ramin a chance to live a fulfilling life. Our family has overcome so many challenges and learnt so much just to make it this far. Seeing Ramin apply himself to his speech therapy sessions is enough to tell us we are on the right track. I can't wait to sing along with him and his brother someday soon.

YUNUS JANUARY (No 861)



I lost my hearing in both ears at the age of 12 years after a bout of viral meningitis. My left ear at the time, had enough functional hearing to get by with a hearing aid and lots of external support. Although I was assessed for a cochlear implant after being fitted with the hearing aid, I felt that I could make do with the hearing aid and consider an implant for my right ear later in life. After

having reached my 30's, I started experiencing severe bouts of vertigo, which would at times further impair my hearing in my 'good' left ear. My hearing loss in this ear had by now

progressed from mild-to moderate to moderate-to profound. I was subsequently diagnosed with Meniere's syndrome. After chatting to my audiologist and undergoing a number of tests, including an MRI scan, we came to the decision that an implant would be beneficial. Since it would be in my right ear, we were a bit worried that the lack of stimulation over the prior 23 years would result in a less than successful outcome. My implant took place on the 10th of February 2021 and my switch-on a few weeks later. Although I am still getting accustomed to the new sound, I am able to communicate reasonably well wearing just the cochlear implant. The range of sounds I am able to hear has broadened and are also becoming clearer as time goes by. Overall, I think it has been a success.

VANESSA VAN BRED A (No 864)



I started losing my hearing in my late 20's. I have been wearing hearing aids for about 28 years. During this time, my hearing deteriorated to such an extent that I was relying on lip-reading. My hearing problem caused a lot of frustration and tears. It made me feel isolated and stupid. I was at my wits end when I went to see my Audiologist in January 2021.

Various tests were done to see if I was a CI candidate before my surgery was set for 16 March 2021. All went well and activation day was set for 12 April 2021. I was not expecting to hear much on activation. Much to my surprise I could follow the conversation between my husband and my audiologist, but I was laughing so much as they sounded like Mickey Mouse including myself. Three months down the road I can truly say this is a miracle. I get so excited when I hear something new, I feel like a child in a candy store. Thank you to all the wonderful ladies who have helped me and who continue to help me on this amazing journey.

DONALD TOLMIE (No 870)



Ek is in November 1952 in Windhoek, Namibië gebore. Twee maande te vroeg, dus 'n prematuur baba. Daardie jare was daar nie broeikaste nie en word ek in 'n skoendoos wat met watte uitgevoer was, toegemaak. Ek kry toe boonop geelsug. Dit het albei my ore in 'n erge graad aangetas. Aan die einde van 1959 het ons as gesin na Laaiplek verhuis wat my grootwordwêreld sou word. My ouers het nooit agtergekom dat ek erg hardhorend was nie. Ek kon myself leer liplees. In my Graad 2 jaar het die onderwyseres onraad gemerk en my ma kom sien. Na gehoortoetse kon hulle met sekerheid vasstel dat ek erg gehoorgestremd was. Eers is net een gehoorapparaat voorgeskryf. Later jare het 'n tweede gehoorapparaat gevolg. So is ek deur my skoolloopbaan in hoofstroomskole. Ek moes altyd heelvoor in die klas sit om te kon hoor. Na skool volg my dienspligjaar. Op universiteit kon ek die grade BA, BT en MTh

behaal. In 1994 het ek, Rita, my vrou en ons twee kinders ons op Somerset Wes kom vestig Ek het n oorspesialis gesoek en by Dr Wagenfeld uitgekom. Die feit dat ek juis by hom moes uitkom, sien ek as 'n bestiering van my Here. Deur my kontak met hom kon ek n kogleëre inplanting in April 2021 kry. Met die hulp van die span by Tygerberg Hospitaal, asook die geduld van my oudioloog is ek steeds besig om aan te pas by my "nuwe gehoor" ervaring.

LUSAPHO MAYEZANA (No 872)



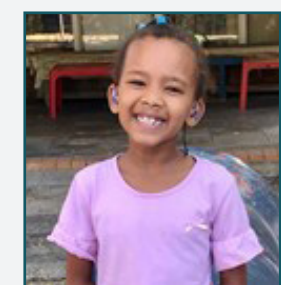
Lusapho Mayezana is a 10-year-old girl, living in Stellenbosch, Kayamandi with both parents and little brother.

Her class teacher noticed that she struggled to hear and suggested a hearing test. She was first diagnosed at Paarl hospital with severe hearing loss in both ears

and received hearing aids. She could not cope at the mainstream school and she started at the Carel Du Toit school in 2019.

Even with her hearing aids, she still struggled with speech and her studies. In 2020 the Audiologist recommend a cochlear implant. In May 2021, she went through surgery and is now happily using her cochlear implant. We are happy with the progress she has made so far. We used to call her when she was playing with other kids and she would not respond because she couldn't hear you, until someone patted her on the back. Now she is hearing and learning a whole lot of new sounds she couldn't hear before. We couldn't be happier as her parents.

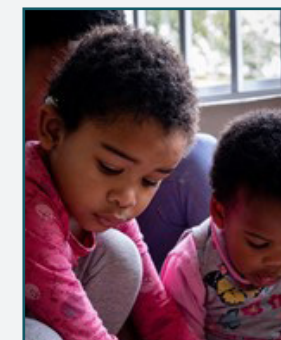
DANELL PIETERSEN (No 873)



Danell is vroeg en ook doof gebore.

Ons het op 3 jarige ouderdom besef sy is doof. Sy het gehoorapparaat in 2018 gekry. Drie jaar later het sy gekwalifiseer vir 'n kogleëre inplanting. Dit was 3 Mei 2021, en twee weke daarna was die aanskakeling. Sedert die inplanting toon sy goeie vordering.

ELLE ARENDSE (No 874)



Elle was born with a bilateral, moderate to severe hearing loss and was fitted with hearing aids at the age of five months. We started at the Parent Guidance program at the Carel du Toit Centre to help Elle on her hearing journey.

Over the first 3 years of her life, regular testing revealed that her

hearing was deteriorating and would continue to do so. Her beloved hearing-aids would not be sufficient. Specialists advised that the best hearing devices were cochlear implants.

In March 2021, with the generous donations of family, friends, strangers and organizations we raised enough money for Elle to have bilateral cochlear implant surgery. The 17th May 2021 was the big day, in an emotional moment she said goodbye to her hearing aids. The surgery was over sooner than we anticipated, and it was a huge success. On 8th June 2021, we had our "switch on" and it has been the most magical three months. Elle's vocabulary has grown tremendously, her language development has exploded and with practice her speech is improving. She absolutely can't live without her cochlear implants. Her teacher at school has commented on the change in Elle since she received her implants. She is more social and speaks in full sentences. As parents, we were overwhelmed with the new technology but with the support and our dedication it all seems like a walk in the park. We are so excited for Elle's future, and we are looking forward to growing and learning with her on this journey.

TRACEY LONGSTAFF (No 880)



I was implanted on 10 June 2021 and activated on 25 June and my life has changed so much since then! From hearing my cat purr for the first time in 3 years, to my dog's nails clicking on the tiles as he follows me to the kitchen hoping for a treat, to being able to hear a conversation around the table and actually contribute, to hearing people talking to me whilst wearing a mask and to being

able to understand a man with an American accent talk to me via a Zoom meeting ... this is amazing and this is only after one month! There are many on this journey with me.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!



Listening And Spoken Language Specialists certified Auditory Verbal Therapists: LSLScertAVT

In April of this year Jenni Bester, of the Carel du Toit team and Barbara Kellett from THUSCIU successfully wrote their 4 hour on line certification exam becoming the first Auditory Verbal Therapists to certify in South Africa.

This certification process required 900 hours of professional experience working with the families of deaf babies and toddlers. Auditory Verbal UK equipped them with 70 hours of online learning, 20 hours of mentored sessions and the opportunity to be supported by a network of qualified professionals in the field keen to share their expertise and encourage upskilling. This training was partially sponsored by industry.

Auditory Verbal therapy is a rigorous training that skills therapists in both the theory and practice of supporting parents to become the agents for developing their child's early listening brain for later talking and thinking.

Worldwide there are currently only 1000 certified LISTENING AND SPOKEN LANGUAGE SPECIALISTS/ Certified AUDITORY VERBAL THERAPISTS with under 300 therapists residing in countries other than the USA.

There are 3 more of our colleagues who will write in 2022 putting South Africa on the global stage for delivering best practice to the families that we serve.

SAYING GOODBYE TO SURIDA BOOYSEN



"I have news!

I am writing to tell you that I resigned as Audiologist at the CI Unit, with my last day being Wed 4 August 2021. Canadian adventure awaits!

Many of you know that my sister relocated to Alberta, Canada a couple of years ago. Initially, I did not consider a similar move, but over time, my opinion changed.

I was offered a great opportunity in December 2020, but Covid challenges prevented processing my work permit. I made peace that it was not meant to be. However, my prospective employers remained committed to me and amazingly I was invited to apply for permanent residency late June 2021. Now I needed to be in Canada before 31 August 2021. This was an extraordinary chance, and while sudden, I embraced it with both hands. I am extremely grateful to Jenny and the CI audio team for their support and understanding taking over my patients, all while executing my exit plan in 4 weeks.

I have been extremely blessed in my career thus far to work with the most amazing, dedicated people, and I thank you for their role in shaping me into the person I am today. I appreciate your camaraderie and for sharing your knowledge, insights, and experience so readily over the years.

My best wishes accompany you and your loved ones in the future. I would love to stay in touch!"

Surida

Surida on her last day at her office in Tygerberg Hospital. We are going to miss you.

Our thoughts and condolences to their loved ones.

IN MEMORIAM

THANK YOU

During 2020 and 2021 fifteen of our cochlear implant recipients passed away.



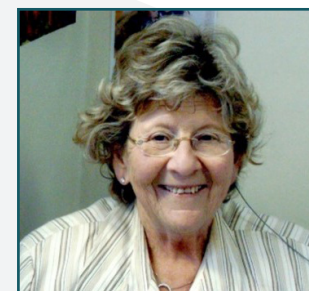
Faan Cronjé (No 295)
† 2 Jan 2020
Received his CI 23 April 2007



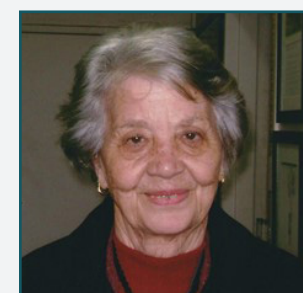
Doloris Wallace (No 724)
† 31 March 2020
Received her CI 23 April 2018



Charné Botha (No 379)
† 17 Feb 2020
Received her CI 3 June 2010



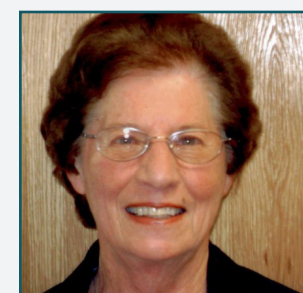
Marilyn Goldberg (No 292)
† 21 Oct 2020
Received her first CI 1 March 2007 and the second 31 Oct 2014.



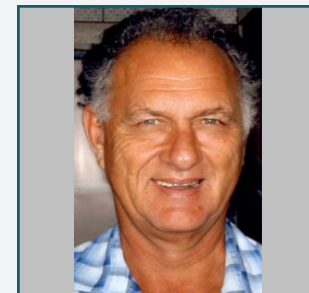
Nellie Burger (No 623)
† 28 Febr 2020
Received her CI 16 May 2016



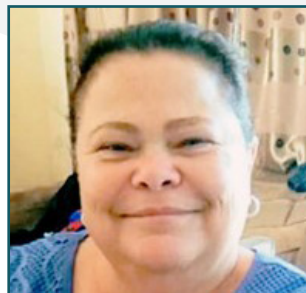
Bradwin Martin (No 345)
† 21 Oct 2020
Received his first implant on 1 Dec 2008 and his second 12 Nov 2012



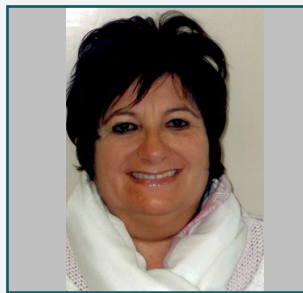
Ruth Hammer (No 449)
† 6 March 2020
Received her CI 7 June 2012



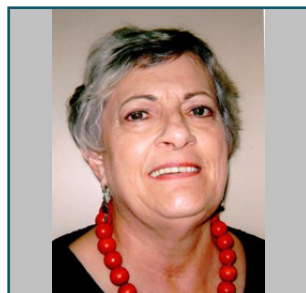
Theuns Wessels (No 371)
† 1 Dec 2020
Received his CI 1 March 2010



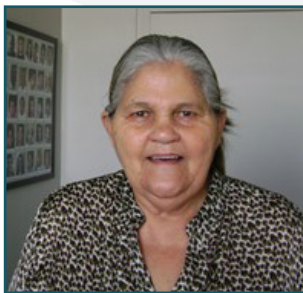
Shirley Bester (No 795)
† 28 Dec 2020
Received her CI 29 July 2019



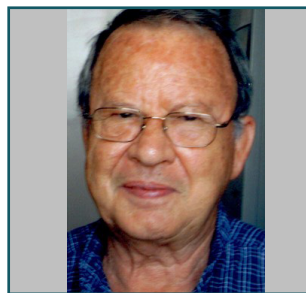
Diane Gurland (No 444)
† 4 Jul 2021
Received her CI 19 March 2012



Hester van Wyk (No 634)
† 4 Jan 2021
Received her CI 29 Aug 2016



Monica Farmer (No 543)
† 24 Aug 2021
Received her CI 18 Aug 2014



Hughie Grant (No 470)
† 6 June 2021
Received his CI 3 Dec 2012



Christa Huon (No 298)
† 3 May 2021
Received her CI 14 May 2007



Amy Thomson (No 494)
† 21 Feb 2021
Received her CI 7 June 2013



The Tygerberg Hospital-Stellenbosch University Cochlear Implant Unit team members would like to express our gratitude to the audiologists who refer their pediatric and adult patients for CI evaluations when hearing aids are no longer providing them with the hearing they need for daily communication.

We also want to thank our donors, the Harry Crossley Foundation, for their wonderful generosity and financial support in making it possible for some prospective implantees to receive a cochlear implant. Also, a big thank you to the Albie Saayman Fund, which is administered via the Hear Us charity, for the financial help in the maintenance of sound processors of needy recipients. Hear Us (www.hearus.org.za) is the fundraising arm of our CI unit. The lives of each person that is helped are changed forever as you have read in the stories of this newsletter. Thank you also to our CI users who donate items and spares of older versions of their sound processors that they no longer use. We can assure you that it makes a big difference in the lives of your fellow implant recipients in helping to maintain their technology.

A special word of thanks to the management of Tygerberg Hospital for their support that we have received over the years. Finally thank you to our team members for their dedication and passion in sharing their knowledge and expertise in giving the gift of hearing to the families and recipients of cochlear implants.



A SOUTH AFRICAN COCHLEAR IMPLANT ASSOCIATION

HEAR US operates in close association with the Tygerberg Hospital-Stellenbosch University Cochlear Implant Unit



@HearUsZa



@Hearus_cochlearimplants_za



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DONATE

Yes, I would like to make a difference and give someone the gift of hearing.

- Make a direct deposit/EFT
- Make an annual contribution
- Monthly debit order
- Make a bequest in your will
- Support specific cochlear implant user
- Make HEAR US your charity of choice
- List us as beneficiary on your Woolworths MySchool card

HEAR US Bank: ABSA
Durbanville branch code: 632005
Account number: 4053388469
SWIFT CODE: ABSAZAJJ

E-mail: hello@hearus.org.za
www.hearus.org.za



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.



COCHLEAR IMPLANT UNIT
KOGLEËRE INPLANTINGSEENHEID
TYGERBERG HOSPITAAL



NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2021
NUUSBRIEF DESEMBER 2021