

1000th COCHLEAR IMPLANT RECIPIENT!



Athule Mgodeli (27) has become the 1000th individual to receive a cochlear implant from the Tygerberg Hospital-Stellenbosch University Cochlear Implant Unit on 29 September 2023. This momentous occasion coincided with World Deaf Awareness Month and is a major milestone for our programme, a worthy cause for celebration.

Tygerberg Hospital is one of the largest tertiary public

health facilities in the country to provide cochlear implants to and to manage both state and private patients. Our programme has expanded since it started in 1986 and Audiology services are now also offered at private satellite clinics in Wynberg, Panorama, Bellville and Paarl. Around 60-70 life-changing procedures are carried out each year by the Cochlear Implant Programme team.

ATHULI MGODELI'S STORY (NO 1000)



Athule, from Khayelitsha, lost his hearing as a result of meningitis at the age of 10. He was diagnosed with a profound sensori-neural hearing loss in both ears which meant that he was permanently and totally deaf.

He was assessed at the Tygerberg Hospital- Stellenbosch University cochlear implant unit at age 10 and again two years later to determine if a cochlear implant would be able to help him hear better. Unfortunately, at the time, such a procedure proved to be unaffordable for both Athule and the hospital.

"Being deaf has affected almost every aspect of my life. When I was at school, I liked to read books a lot, that is how I was coping with the challenges of being deaf. Sometimes people do not understand when I ask them to speak slower so I can be able to read their lips. I believe that the cochlear implant will change my life for the better and bring back my hearing. As a deaf person, it is difficult to find work and I am hoping that this implant will change my future in a positive way."

His mother, Nomza Mgodeli, says the date 31 August 2005 will forever be imprinted in her memory. It is the day their lives as a family changed forever. Athule had to adjust from functioning as a normal hearing child to suddenly being in complete silence. He had to learn to lip-read and use other cues from his environment to make sense of his surroundings," said Nomza.

Athule continued living in his silent world. As a highly motivated individual, he overcame adversity by matriculating in 2015 purely through lipreading. He further defied the odds and obtained a certificate in project management through the National Institute for the Deaf in 2016, and an additional six certificates in computer and business management from other colleges. He graduated in 2022 with a qualification in digital marketing. He is currently working at "I Love Coffee".

After Athule's cochlear implant activation he remarks that he is so grateful to have the chance to hear again. "It has been more than two decades since I last heard sound, therefore it feels like being reborn again. Yes, I am aware that I still have a long way to go before I can hear very well, but I feel and know that it will surely happen."

He is grateful for the financial assistance received from Tygerberg Hospital, the Harry Crossley Foundation and the Hear Always Foundation Trust.

"Being able to hear for the first time is a feeling of gratitude and happiness. I'm excited to hear the sound of birds and music. I can't wait to hear voices and the TV. Thank you to the surgeons and audiologists at Tygerberg Hospital. It's true that you are lifesavers. You helped me by doing something which I thought only God could do, you possess a gift, that rare touch of humanity. Please continue the great work you are doing. I'm so happy and grateful for everything you have all done for me."

SAVE THE DATE:

1000th COCHLEAR IMPLANT CELEBRATION

YOU ARE INVITED

6 April 2024

RSVP:

antoinettedb@sun.ac.za



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 Kogleêre Inplantingseenheid. Al die pasiënte het hulle families, vriende en die Tygerberg Hospitaal Kogleêre Inplantingseenheid bedank vir die ondersteuning wat hulle ontvang het tydens die inplantingsproses. Baie pasiënte gee ook alle eer aan God.

MISOMIHLE NOMADOLO (NO 913)



We all encounter rainy days in our lives, those times of need, trouble, pain, suffering or loss. Allow me to share my child's story.

I gave birth to a beautiful healthy, baby girl, named Misomihle. At 3 months, she had fever and the GP thought it was normal flu, but she got worse and was admitted to hospital. They ran a few tests, and the results came back saying Miso had meningitis.

Miso developed seizures and the doctors found that she had fluid placing pressure on her brain. We had to move her to Tygerberg Hospital for urgent surgery the following morning. We finally went home, and my baby seemed to be recovering. We had follow-up appointments led by her paediatrician, when the doctor noticed that Misomihle does not respond to any sounds. We were referred to an audiologist who confirmed that my baby girl had become deaf.

I was so emotional and overwhelmed; reality had kicked in that my little angel was really deaf. Later I met my audiologist at Tygerberg Hospital who really has been helpful through every step. With her team they made the calls for MRI scans the medical aid etc, and finally things came together.

On the 1st of March 2022 Misomihle went for her cochlear implant surgery and all went well. From then Misomihle has been going to therapy sessions at CHAT Centre where her speech therapist helps us with speech and helping Misomihle to be able to concentrate and learn to hear.

We still have a long journey ahead of us but I'm very thankful for my family support.

I thank everyone who has been involved through Misomihle's journey. A special thanks to our audiologist and speech therapist who are still working with me, teaching my child new things so she can have an expanded future ahead. My baby is improving and her cochlear is 9 months this month, she's trying to learn words and surely soon she will speak.

To every mother out there who has gone through the same journey or who's about to go through that journey, be strong learn with your child, don't forget to pray, God performs miracles, be positive there's always an end to every obstacle.

MICHAEL NONKONELA (NO 936)



I am originally from the Eastern Cape and got meningitis whereafter I lost all my hearing. I did not know anything about hearing loss and was surprised to learn it is a worldwide challenge.

Receiving a cochlear implant from Tygerberg Hospital has changed my life. I have received assistance and support pertaining to my hearing. I hope that in time I will see more and more progress.

I want to thank the members of Tygerberg Cochlear Implant Unit for being an agent of change and being so patient with me.



LILITHA NDUDE (NO 942)



I'm going to tell you about my cochlear implant. When I wear my cochlear implant, it helps me to hear properly, I feel that I can hear every sound that people are saying even when I'm surrounded by lots of people.

When I had hearing aids previously, I couldn't hear properly, and I did not like them very much. Luckily my parents decided to take me to Tygerberg Hospital, and I got a cochlear implant.

I was so excited to get a cochlear implant and can see the difference between having hearing aids and a cochlear implant. I'm super happy to have cochlear and I am glad to wear it every day so that I can hear. I am grateful for the people who helped me along the way.



ALICE BREDÁ (NO 945)



Ek is 60 jaar oud. Ek het ontdek net na my troue in 1981 dat my gehoor begin afneem het. Ek het 'n paar jaar later gehoorapparate begin dra en hulle het my tot 'n mate gehelp maar klank was nie altyd duidelik nie. My gehoor het verswak deur die jare en ek het uiteindelik by Tygerberg Hospitaal uitgekom aangesien ek nie meer op 'n mediese fonds was nie. My oudioloog het my verwys vir 'n kogleêre implanting en mooi verduidelik wat dit behels.

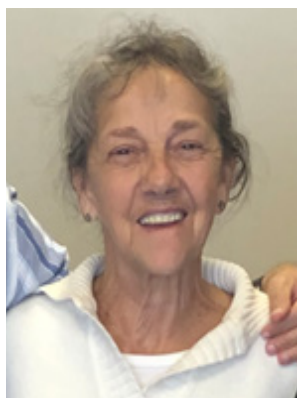
Die nuus dat ek 'n KI kon kry het my vol hoop gelaat vir 'n verbetering in my gehoor! Ek, my man en kinders was senuweeagtig oor die operasie aangesien dit so sensitiëf was, maar als het goed afgeloop en ek was tevrede.

Die aanskakeling was baie opwindend en ek het net aanhou vir myself sê, "Ek gaan vandag weer hoor, dalk nie als nie maar ek gaan weer kan hoor!". So het my gehoor week vir week verbeter en nou kan ek weer saam gesels, musiek luister, TV luister en tot my man hoor as hy met my gesels! O ja, en die honde se geblaf!

Ek is so in my noppies met my nuwe gehoor!



HELENA TERBLANCHE (NO 947)



Waar begin ek?

My balans en gehoorversteuring het in 2020 begin en al hoe erger geword. Daarmee saam word ek benoud en bang.

Gelukkig ontmoet ek my oudioloog in Saldanha (wat 'n engel) en gaan die eerste keer in my lewe vir 'n gehoortoets. Ek kry gehoorapparate maar twee weke later word ek wakker en als is doodstil, geen voëlsang of honde se geblaf, ek is stokdoof! My oudioloog verwys my dadelik vir 'n Kogleêre Implanting. Ek het nie eers geweet daar bestaan so iets nie.

So begin my lewe verander. Ek ontmoet my volgende oudioloog (my heldin) by Tygerberg Hospitaal en my seuns (my staatmakers) spring in en reël al my nodige afspraak. Ek ontmoet my ONK sjirurg en saam verduidelik hulle die KI prosedure en ek wonder of ek sal kwalifiseer vir 'n KI.

Na baie maande en menige ondersoeke, trane en gebede kry ek die goeie nuus, ek kwalifiseer vir 'n kogleêre implanting!

Op die oggend van my sjirurgie word ek wakker en dink ek is in die hemel, ek voel so kalm en vertrou my Geneesheer! Als verloop goed en tydens my aanskakeling kan ek weer hoor en herken tot my seun se stem! Met elke programmeringsafspraak is daar verbetering, wat 'n wonderwerk!

CARIAH VAN ZYL (NO 953)



On Spring Day 2021, the Lord blessed us with a beautiful baby girl. Up until today our little girl, Cariah remains a fighter. During my pregnancy we found out that there were complications regarding her growth. Doctors gave their thoughts, but we walked in faith and kept on believing in the wonders of God. At our last visit before Cariah was born, we were informed that everything she was diagnosed with during my pregnancy was healed.

On the 15th of September 2022, after a long journey with hospital visits, doctors and specialists, we received the news that Carah was profoundly deaf and needed bilateral cochlear implants. Parents would know that receiving news like that is not easy. Having to know your little baby must fight a disability; it is just heart breaking!

Cariah will be turning two years soon and we will be celebrating her one-year hearing birthday! We as parents are so proud of her and is grateful for this huge milestone and what wonders these implants can do.

When you call her, she responds. When the music plays, Cariah gives her best moves! When you talk to her, she listens. There is still a long road ahead of us, but we are so excited to see Cariah achieve her goals and to be an inspiration to others!

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ESETHU MLANDU (NO 954)



I was born in the Eastern Cape and am the eldest daughter of my father.

I started losing my hearing when I was eleven years old in one ear and frequently suffered from tonsilitis. I had to learn to hear with one ear only.

My hearing however got worse, and both my ears felt blocked up. I could not hear especially when other children were talking to me.

I was sent to Tygerberg Hospital where I understood that I could get an operation to help me hear again.

I was scared but trusted God. I was blessed by my parents and got stronger in the process. Now I have a cochlear implant and I can hear everything including music and I can even answer the phone!

Everything is easy for me now; I can communicate with the people I love and appreciate everyone that has been a part of my story. I'm looking forward to studying I.T. soon!

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NASHA BOSMAN (NO 955)



Nasha, is a 12-year-old boy from Kuilsrivier, that was born with normal hearing. He developed spoken language, went to the local school in his neighbourhood, made friends and enjoyed playing sports.

Life however became more complicated when he was about 10 years' old as he started to struggle to hear his family, friends and teachers and his hearing got progressively worse. His speech became unclear, and he had to try and lipread to understand those around him.

At Tygerberg Hospital he was diagnosed with a bilateral moderate-profound sensorineural hearing loss and was fitted with hearing aids. Even though the hearing aids made sounds louder, is still did not make speech clearer and therefore a cochlear implant was recommended.

With the help of NPO HearUs, a partnership was established with the Netcare Foundation who kindly sponsored Nasha's cochlear implant system and the medical costs related to his surgery. Nasha was implanted successfully, and he can now hear clearly again. Nasha was able to stay in his mainstream school and is looking forward to going to Grade 7 next year.

OTHALUVE NONJEKE (NO 957)



Otha is a lovely, happy boy.

Even though he has a hearing loss he got so lucky by getting a cochlear implant and hearing aid! He is attending Carel du Toit School that has excellent teachers that love and work with children who have hearing problems along with therapists trained in how to help children learn to listen and talk. His team are making sure that his hearing technology is working perfect.

Initially I was so concerned that other people won't understand him when he wants something because he could not say a word, but luckily, he got the best speech therapist who also taught me how to deal with a hearing problem. I could teach the rest of my family how to communicate with Otha. Otha is now able to hear when I call him, understand the world around him and know what I am saying. He even started to say some words himself!

LAKIA JACOBS (NO 958)



Ek het vir amper 3 jaar gesukkel om hulp te kry vir my dogtertjie Lakia. Ek het al toe sy 9 maande oud was agter gekom dat daar fout was, maar kon nie agterkom wat dit was nie. Ek was paar keer in en uit by die kliniek met haar maar hulle het gesê dat daar niks fout met haar ontwikkeling is nie en dat sy net laat leer praat, dit was toe nie so nie!

Ons het eers toe sy 2 jaar en 9 maande oud was werklik uitgevind wat die probleem was, sy is doof.

Daarvandaan was ek spoedig gehelp. Haar kogleêre implanting het 2-maande later plaasgevind en haar aanskakeling kort daarna. Daarvandaan het net wonders gebeur. Sy het soveel verander, haar frustrasies, gemoed, die manier hoe sy met ander speel, die manier hoe sy met my praat en hoe sy my en ons familie verstaan. Sy het letterlik binne 'n tydperk van 9 maande wonderlike vordering gemaak!

ALENA VAN ZYL (NO 961)



Op 3 maande oud het ek breinvliesontsteking gehad en van my gehoor verloor. My ouers het nooit agter gekom ek is doof tot en met hulle my na 'n horende skool toe gestuur het waar die onderwysers agter gekom het ek reageer nie in klas nie. Ek is die enigste dowe persoon in my familie.

Ek het my hele lewe lank 'n gehoorapparaat gedra en was altyd te bang gewees vir 'n kogleêre implanting todat 'n kogleêre implanting vir my aanbeveel was in 2022. Ek het deur al my familie en vriende se ondersteuning ingestem vir die operasie.

In Februarie 2023 het ek gegaan vir my operasie en Maart 2023 was my aanskakeling. Wat 'n wonderlike ervaring was dit nie! Dit het my lewe verander! My eerste geluide wat ek kon hoor na my aanskakeling was die hamer se gekap in die vetrek langs my oudioloog se spreekkamer en toe my dogter se stem toe sy my vra "Mamma kan jy my hoor?", die motor se flukkerlig en die water wat in die toilet loop. Dit voel of ek 'n hele nuwe wêreld ingevaar het. Ek kan so baie nuwe klanke hoor en dinge beleef. In April

2023 kon ek my eerste voice note op die foon geluister en vandag is daar geen keer aan my nie. Ek het die beste span by Tygerberg wat my deur my hele proses ondersteun het. Ek sal vir ewig dankbaar wees.

ZIDAN ARENDSE (NO 966)



I am 3 years old!

I was born prematurely at 31 weeks gestation during the pandemic, and I spent two months in NICU. I was dependant on oxygen for more than 1 month, and often forgot to breathe on my own. A month later I developed an infection in hospital and had to have a blood transfusion done. Later that month the audiologist did a hearing screening which I failed. On the 1st of October 2020 I finally made my way home to meet the rest of the family!

Later, my mother raised concern regarding my hearing and went to see the audiologist. I then failed my screening test again and the audiologist referred me to get an ABR. The ABR was done in October 2022. Not the best news to receive, I was declared profoundly deaf, but I received hearing aids within two weeks.

The audiologist proceeded to do more tests and found that the hearing aids was not strong enough for my hearing and recommended we get Cochlear implants.

5 months later I was implanted by my kind surgeon. My journey continued and the hard part is over, I was enrolled at Carel Du Toit School where I am learning to speak.

My vocabulary consists of 'mama, papa, open, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and I love you!' Oh, and I recently also learnt to say bye-bye!

As 1st time, hearing parents, this journey has not been easy, but I can say with confidence that the team at Tygerberg was the best people we could have met to help us along this journey.

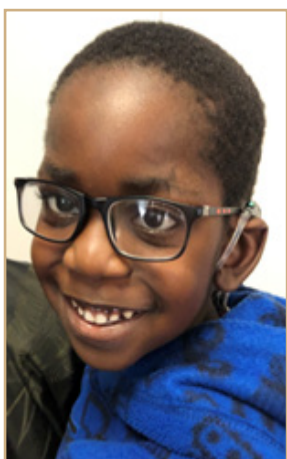
HENRI KOEKEMOER (NO 967)



Die dag toe ons gehoor het Henri het kogleêre implantings nodig, was ons glad nie kwaad of teleurgesteld nie. Ons het geweet dat dit hom die gehoor sal gee om amper soos 'n horende kind te kan hoor.

Binne in ons vriendekring het van ons vriende wie se kinders kogleêre implantings gekry het, nog altyd net positiewe goed gesien. Ons het ook gesien wat se impak dit op hul gehoor het. Daarom is ons vandag nog nooit spyt oor die besluit wat ons geneem het vir Henri nie. Ons is diep dankbaar vir die borge en donasies wat dit alles moontlik maak sodat Henri wéér kan hoor.

JOSHUA MAYINZA (NO 968)



Joshua was born with very low blood sugar. He had to spend 3 weeks in the NICU and was transferred from the one hospital to the other. All of this affected his hearing and his eyes, he had bilateral cataracts.

In 2019 Joshua got his hearing aids and adjusting to that was not easy.

When he turned 2,5 years old, he started going to Carel du Toit School. He was doing well, and he could hear well with his hearing aids. But then his hearing started to deteriorate in his left ear. The audiologist suggested that he needs a cochlear implant.

In May 2023 Joshua had his cochlear implant surgery which went really well. He heard so well with his cochlear implant, but then in September something started going wrong with his implant and the electrodes started switching off until he could not hear anything. Then another surgery had to be done to replace his cochlear implant.

This was a very difficult time for us as a family and for Joshua as his speech started dragging and he could not hear well at all.

Luckily all went well with his replacement surgery, and he can hear again! His cochlear implant has helped him to hear and speak clearly, thanks to the Tygerberg Cochlear Implant Unit.

/// CHRISTOPHER SILENCE (NO 969)



Hi, my name is Christopher Silence from Mfuleni township. I have lost my hearing 10 years ago and there was no hope of getting my hearing back, even hearing aids couldn't help.

After knowing that my hearing was gone, I thought my life was over. People even acted like I was not there and if someone came to my house they just talked to my wife or my daughter. I felt disrespected, my ideas were not taken seriously. The good thing is I didn't have courage to take my own life, but I considered it many times. The only way of communicating with other people was writing. As time went by, I started to learn to read the lips when people are talking. That helped a little, but I was incorrect most of the time.

One day at Mfuleni clinic an audiologist introduced a cochlear implant to me. That was the beginning of my journey to hearing again. She made appointment for me at Khayelitsha Hospital and Khayelitsha Hospital made appointment for me at Tygerberg Hospital. Here my audiologist explained everything, and I was excited, there was hope at last. She prepared me until the day of operation.

After the operation I didn't hear anything, and I was told that I will hear only when the device has been activated. Came the day of activation I heard sounds for the first time in a very long time, I was happy and couldn't wait to get home and tell them I can hear! People sounded like small children; they were talking in tiny voices.

Things got better and better each time I attended my appointments with my audiologist. Now my confidence is back as I can hear again.

/// LISA ABRHAMS (NO 971)



A cochlear implant was the best gift of my life!

I was very positive about receiving a cochlear implant and after a successful operation, it took two weeks to heal.

My experience with hearing with a cochlear implant is that I was very overwhelmed at first. It was a huge challenge to learn to understand the sound from the cochlear implant. I started to hear so many sounds in my environment...I could hear from far away like aeroplanes, my gate making a noise outside my house, noise inside the house, the cupboard opening and closing, water in the kettle, the microwave, the wind and the click-click of the gas stove. I could hear children/adults breathing, the car engine making a noise and people talking in the passage. I could even hear the voices of my sister talking on a video call from Dubai. The cochlear implant had really improved my communication and speech. I further also don't need a Sign Language interpreter in a smaller group.

The lesson learned with a CI is that I appreciate sound and I am very grateful to hear better than with my hearing aids.

It is still a long process and journey. I hope to get a cochlear implant in my left ear as well in the future.

MPHUMUZI CHRIS YEKO (NO 972)



I am 29-year-old and originally from an extremely poor family in Eastern Cape, Libode. I was not born with hearing loss, but things happen on this planet. I only lost my hearing in primary school. Before that, my hearing was normal, and I was a good listener when it came to music and voice recognition. All those good things only lasted a short time.

In 2004 (at 10 years old), I started to realise I no longer heard people the way I used to. I suddenly started to dislike music and listening to stories, was lost in conversations, and giving wrong answers. My hearing loss continued all through my school years and I started to act as useless and became a joker to those around me but really, all my confidence was gone.

As the years went on, people started to notice my loss of hearing while others never knew as I did not talk about it with my friends. I survived by reading lips and reading books.

Eventually at 14 years old, my mom took me for a hearing check in Mthatha and they confirmed that I needed to wear hearing aid machines in both ears. I heard a bit better, but the voices were not clear at all, so I decided to stop using them. I passed grade 12 without using those machines and in University I used the left hearing aid only.

During Covid19, communicating through masks was extremely hard for me especially at work and even putting my hearing aids in did not even give me clear sound. In 2022 I went to look for help and was seen at Tygerberg Hospital where they ran some tests and checkups and introduced me to a cochlear implant. I was over excited and afraid at the same time.

In April 2023, I received my operation. One week later after the operation, the processor was switched on, I went two full consecutive weeks of hearing only piano sounds, but I never panicked, I kept putting it on until I heard the old music song on the radio. I was so excited and surprised, the new voice started to come, clear and better, the more I put the CI on, the more I realised that new sound in my ears. Now, my confidence is back, and I no longer have to rely only on reading lips.

I am so grateful to all the cochlear implant team who brought my life back.

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CHARLOTTE KOK (NO 974)



Charlotte was born with moderate to severe hearing loss. We didn't notice it at first, but as she grew older, we started to suspect that something was wrong.

At 7 months old she went under anaesthesia for the first of many hearing tests. Our hearts were broken when we heard the news of her impairment, and we felt unsure of her future, but Charlotte's joyful glow and love for life kept us going!

We started our journey with CHAT where we found the support and care we needed to help Charlotte. We truly have an amazing team.

In September 2022, Charlotte finally got to hear her dad say "Hello beautiful" when she was fitted with hearing aids at 9 months old. She started loving music, humming, and dancing. She was hitting milestones like a champion, and after lots of hard work from Mom and Dad, she quickly learnt spoken words and sign language.

But, even though she was learning lots of words, she wasn't able to say the one we'd all been waiting for, "Mama".

Further testing revealed bilateral Cochlear implants would allow her to hear the sounds that she is missing.

On the 9th of May 2023 Charlotte had her bilateral cochlear implant surgery. After switch-on Charlotte settled into her new way of hearing very quickly. Within a couple of weeks, she was mimicking sounds we were making, noticing sounds off in the distance and finally said Mama for the first time!

Charlotte has only had her implants for about 5 months, but the change in her is like night and day. Her vocabulary has advanced massively, and she is learning more and more words daily! We are so grateful that we were able to provide her with the best option for her and we are even more grateful for how well she is doing. We are excited to watch her learn and grow!

JENNIFER PHILIPS (NO 976)



At the age of 25 I had a stapedectomy in my left ear which did improve the hearing in that ear. But after a few years, it deteriorated again, and I started wearing hearing aids by the time I was about 28.

Even with the hearing aids it was at times a battle to follow conversations in work meetings and seminars, which caused me anxiety and embarrassment in the corporate world. Even if bosses are understanding, clients are not always patient and understanding.

At the age of 51, my surgeon gave me my second stapedectomy, which was a great success, and I didn't really use my hearing aid much for about 5 years.

But five years later, I contracted a virus and suffered from sudden and severe hearing loss.

I was almost completely deaf for nearly two weeks, but the situation did improve with the use of cortisone. After that, however, I had to get two new powerful hearing aids again.

Then in 2022 I again had a sudden drop in my hearing and could not hear much even with my two hearings aids. My surgeon had been urging me to investigate a cochlear implant for several years, but I must admit that I found the idea of the operation intimidating and kept putting off the tests I was advised to have for this.

Eventually in February this year, I decided to take his advice, and went for tests and consultations with my audiologist at Tygerberg Hospital. The consultations helped me very much to start considering the Cochlear Implant in a more positive light.

Eventually in May this year, at age 61, I had my cochlear Implant operation, and the recovery went very well indeed. Soon after I had my switch on! From there, things have just got better and better, and it is so great to be able to communicate better with people, and to be able to participate in Bible Studies, get to know people at Church and in running my own business, without the extreme strain of battling to hear. I have made a number of new friends at Church this year, and it is such a joy to be able to listen to and get to know new people, without the struggle of continually asking them to repeat themselves.

Thanks so much to my surgeon and especially to my audiologist who have made my journey with hearing so positive this year.

MARTIE BORNMAN (NO 977)



Ek het die afgelope 15 jaar gehoorapparate gedra en my gehoor het so bly verswak dat ek nie meer aan gewone geselskap kon deelneem nie, ek het myself al meer sosiaal onttrek. Selfs persoon tot persoon kommunikasie was 'n probleem. Boonop het my sig ook al so verswak as gevolg van makulêre degenerasie, dat my laaste uitweg was om 'n kogleêre inplanting te kry om nog te kan kommunikeer.

Direk na die aanskakeling van die apparaat was die klank vreemd en onverstaanbaar.

Binne twee weke met oefening kon ek woorde begin herken, en nie lank daarna selfs kort sinne indien daar stadig gepraat word. Liplees help natuurlik ook. Die "sonbesie" klank is ook vinnig reggestel. Dit het ook al beter gegaan met die geruis wat ek soms in my oor het wat soos 'n storm buite klink. Die klanke was ook nie blikkerig nie, en my eie stem het normaal begin klink. Nou na 5 maande klink my huismense se stemme al meer normaal, veral die basstem, en hoor ek meeste van wat gesê word. Ek vind steeds baat by die gebruik van liplees. Die radio en TV sukkel ek nog mee, maar selfoon gesprekke voer ek maklik, en ook as ek my selfoon gebruik om na nuus en musiek te luister. Die vervorming van musiekklanke het ook al verbeter.

Ek glo dat wat ook bygedra het tot my vordering tot dusver, is die feit dat ek nog 'n bietjie gehoor gehad het in die ander oor en nou die nuutste gehoorapparaat in dié oor dra.

ARMAND GROENEWALD (NO 979)

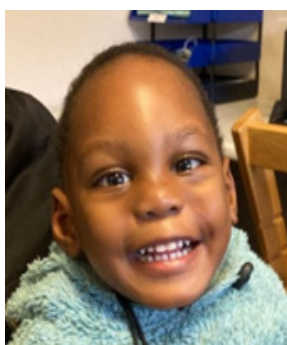


Ek is 40 jaar oud. Ek is met 'n gehoorverlies gebore as gevolg van Duitse masels wat my ma gedurende swangerskap opgedoen het.

Ek was 2 jaar oud toe my gehoorverlies ontdek was. Ek het groot geword met twee gewone gehoorapparate en ek kon klank mooi hoor. Ek het baie geleer en kon spraak hoor. Ek het CDs en musiek geluister, gesing en stories gelees en het met spraak groot geword. Later het my ore seer geraak met infeksie. Toe het ek die gehoor in my linker oor verloor. Ek het opgehou om 'n gehooraparaat in daardie oor te dra want ek kon niks meer hoor nie.

Ek het in 2023 besluit om 'n koglêere implanting in my linker oor te kry. Ek is baie bly en opgewonde om weer klank terug te hê. Ek hoor klomp nuwe skerp klanke en party klanke het ek nog nooit voorheen gehoor nie. Ek hoor klanke soos klein diere (muise en hamsters), water, reën, voete wat sleep as mense loop, honde as hulle water lek, papier, plastiek, sleutels, en die "s" klank is helder. Stem is ook mooi duidelik. Ek is baie opgewonde oor die nuwe klanke wat ek kan hoor en ek is baie dankbaar daarvoor.

TROY MIYA (NO 980)



Troy was diagnosed with profound hearing loss at 1 year, we were heartbroken though we suspected it. He was given hearing aids but eventually it became evident that he needs a cochlear implant.

After his switch-on he now attends Carel du Toit School where we can see the positive changes in him. So many sounds are new to him. A cochlear implant is magnificent, and we are working hard for him to start talking. He is now a happy and delightful boy!

HANNAH MACHOKOTO (NO 981)



It all began in December 2021 when Hannah was just a year and four months old. As attentive parents, we noticed that something may be amiss with her hearing. Determined to find answers and provide the best possible care for our daughter, we took her to an audiologist in search of a diagnosis.

The visit confirmed our fears, Hannah indeed had a hearing loss. To assess the magnitude of her condition, an Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) Test revealed a profound hearing loss in both of Hannah's ears.

Determined to seek the best possible assistance for our precious daughter, we were recommended to visit the Carel Du Toit Centre.

As Hannah's journey progressed, the decision to undergo cochlear implant surgery was made. Thanks to the expertise and care provided by the medical team, the surgery was a success.

The moment we had long awaited finally arrived - the day of activation. As the world of sound opened up to her, our hearts were filled with indescribable joy. Hannah could hear for the very first time. Witnessing this incredible transformation was a profound experience.

Hannah's newfound ability to hear has undeniably transformed her life. She is now able to engage with the world around her and connect with others through language and communication. Seeing her flourish and embrace every opportunity is a testament to her resilience and the unconditional support of those who have been part of this remarkable journey.

As for our audiologist and early interventionist, their presence and belief in her potential have been a source of strength for us. We know that Hannah will continue to reach new heights and thrive.

If there is one lesson we have learned from this experience, it is the power of hope and the importance of coming together as a community. We remain deeply grateful for the advancements in medical technology and the dedicated professionals who have played a vital role in helping Hannah regain her hearing.

We look forward to sharing more of Hannah's milestones and celebrating the joy she brings to our lives every day.

MIKHULU NKITSHU (NO 986)

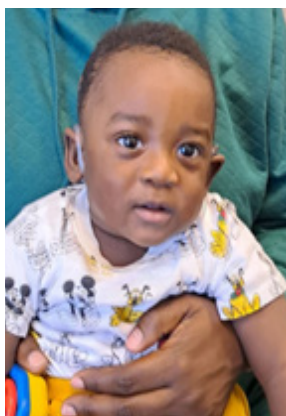


Mikhulu was born prematurely at 7 months. I (her mother) noticed that at the age of 1 year 2 months Mikhulu couldn't make sentences. I decided to take her to Red Cross Hospital, and they found that her ears were filled with fluid and that her sinus and tonsils were infected. She received an operation to treat these. After the operation I however noticed no difference and took her back to hospital. A hearing test was performed, and I was referred to the Carel du Toit Centre.

The audiologist at the school informed us that Mikhulu's is deaf and told us that she needs a cochlear implant and explained how it works. This gave us as parents hope.

The cochlear implant operation went well, and she was switched-on. Her hearing was improving a lot, and we could not believe there was such a big difference, the cochlear implant made a huge difference to our daughters' life.

GEOVANNE SANTOS (NO 987)



At 26 weeks of gestation Geovanne was prematurely born weighing only 935g. He was immediately taken to the NICU, intubated and with little chance of survival. We spent 75 days in the NICU, many prayers, many ups and downs, many tears, fear, and joy when I finally went home with my son!

Everything was going very well despite extreme prematurity, and he was a very healthy baby. A hearing test was however recommended, and he failed this test. More in-depth tests were recommended, and the result was that my son was diagnosed with bilateral profound deafness. At first, I thought that he would grow up and his hearing would improve but we repeated the exam more than 2 times, and the result was the same, my boy was indeed deaf.

After listening to the doctor, I started to read a lot about sensori-neural deafness and what a cochlear implant was. It was from there that hope was reborn and immediately, through our insurance company, we turned to the Tygerberg Hospital and with the support of the CHAT centre began the great journey. Our home country is Angola.

At the age of 8 months, Geovanne was successfully operated on, both cochlear implants were placed. On the day of switch-on I thought that the implant had not worked because my son had almost no reaction on the first day. As the days went by with the help of the specialists Geovanne started listening. Today after 3 months my son hears my voice perfectly and responds to stimuli, he already knows how to clap his hands and do "bye", "viva" and he likes music a lot. I can't wait for him to learn how to say mama and papa.

We still have a long process ahead of us, but we are doing very well. I am very grateful and happy for everything I have experienced; I have a son who is my joy and I know that my son is a happy child. For him I would do everything in my power to provide him with a better quality of life.

PHELOKAZI KONZEKA (NO 989)



I am 27 years old. When I was 9 years old my mom noticed that I could not hear when she called my name. My Grade 3 teacher told her to take me hospital to check if maybe I have something in my ears.

In 2013 I received hearing aids for the first time, they were helping a little, but I still needed to follow lips when someone talked to me.

In 2019 I went to Khayelitsha Hospital in search of improving the quality of my hearing aids because I was struggling academically. I got a new hearing aid but unfortunately, I got robbed when I was writing my final year exam at College, I had to stay without a hearing aid for 2022 and I was struggling in class. I went back to Khayelitsha Hospital where they referred me for a Cochlear Implant, I was so scared of the operation, but I always tell myself that "The future belongs to the risk takers, not the comfort seekers".

My journey with the Cochlear implant has been life changing, at first it was terrible, but now I cannot believe that I can hear so much. To my audiologist and the team, I'm forever grateful for hearing better.

MARIA SAUNDERS (NO 990)



In my familie is daar gehoorverlies en ekself het vanaf my vyftiger jare gehoorapparate gedra. Ek is nou 81jaar oud.

Ek is 'n afgetrede Engels onderwyseres en tieners is nie juis bekend daarvoor dat hulle hard en duidelik praat nie! Ek het altyd my gehoorapparate vir my klasse gewys en vertel hoe duur hulle was (die kinders was verstom!) en hulle dan gevra vir samewerking. Ek het afgesluit met: "There is only one law in this classroom, the law of kindness. You are kind to me and each other and I am kind to you." So het ek dan vir baie jare skool gehou. Enige persoon wat gehoor verlies het, sal weet dit is nie maklik nie.

Na my aftrede het my gehoor nog verder verswak en ek kon nie alles hoor in die kerk, by sosiale geleenthede of wanneer ek nie kan liplees nie. Veral met my kleinkinders se stemmetjies was woordonderskeiding moeilik omdat my gehoorverlies feitlik normaal was vir die lae klanke maar die hoë frekwensies was baie swak.

Ek het nuwe gehoorapparate probeer maar dit het nie gehelp nie. My niggie, Esti Nel, woon in Sydney en sy werk vir Cochlear. Sy het voorgestel dat ek na Tygerberg Hospitaal se Oudiologiese afdeling gaan vir gehoortoetse. En dis waar ek my oudioloog, ontmoet het. Die toetse het bevestig dat ek 'n kogleêre implanting kandidaat was.

Die operasie is uiteindelijke gedoen en was baie suksesvol en pynloos uitgevoer. My ONK is 'n wonderlike, vriendelike en uiters bekwame spesialis wat 'n pionier was met die KI operasies in die Wes Kaap. Alles het goed verloop behalwe dat ek daarna erge vertigo gekry het. Dit het reeds verbeter maar ek het ongelukkig nog steeds balans probleme.

Die aanskakeling van die apparaat het my lewe ten goede verander. Ek hoor baie beter, selfs as ander mense bid tydens die biduur – iets wat ek nooit kon hoor nie. Ek het my vrees vir die telefoon verloor en kan selfs WhatsApp calls maak! In klein groepe kan ek nou alles hoor, tot die grappe!

Was dit alles die moeite en geld werd? Ja en nogmaals ja want ek kan hoor. Ek is nie afgesny van die lewe nie! En ek glo en vertrou dat my balans ook volkome sal herstel.

FUNDRAISING PROJECTS THAT INSPIRED US IN 2023:

HEAR US HARMONY CONCERT

On 9 September 2023 the Hear Us Harmony Concert took place at the Endler Hall, Stellenbosch University. The goal of the concert was to raise funds for and create awareness of cochlear implantation through a celebration of sound.



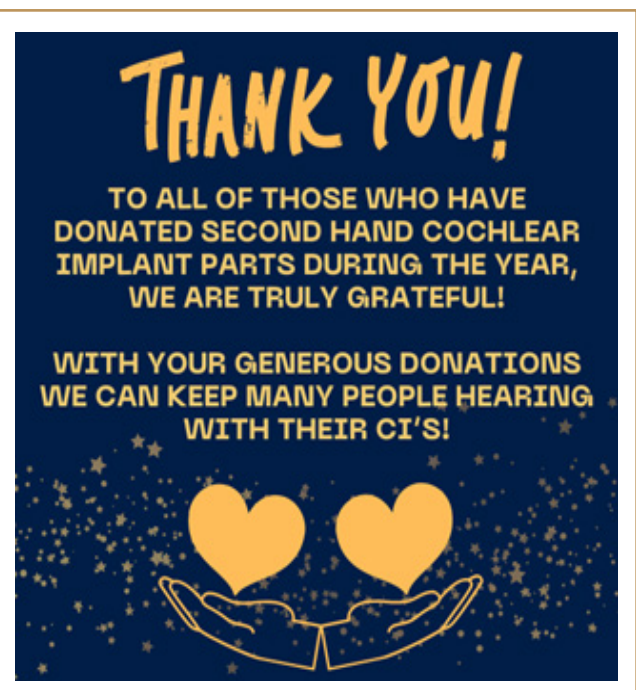
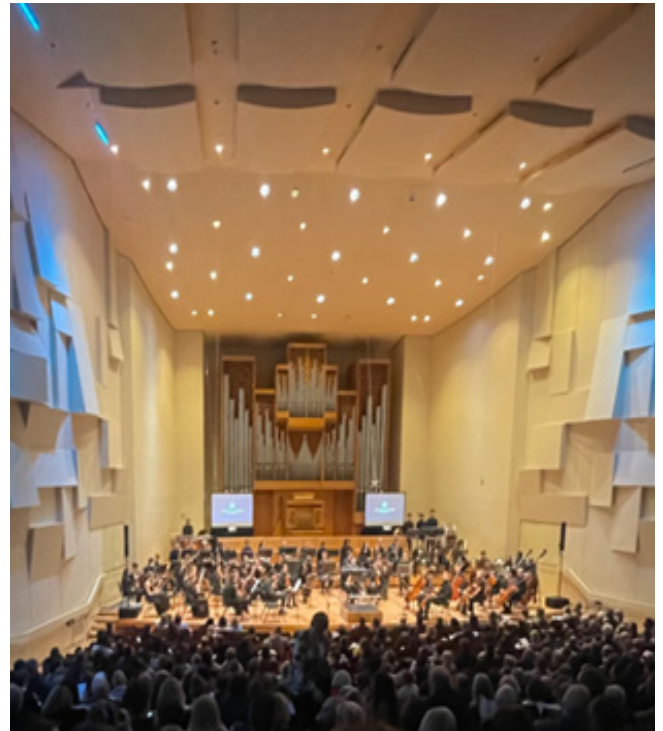
It was a spectacular event of wonderful music and singing with performances by the Stellenbosch Youth Orchestra, Paarl Girls High Choir, and the Heydeburg Symphony Orchestra, with conductors Leonard Heydenrych, Reghardt Kühn, and Chester Meyer.

Two of our young CI users also performed at the concert. Lister Maramba recited the poem "This is me" written by Mariette Nosworthy, and Kate Allwood performed the piano solo "In Dreams" (from Lord of the Rings) by H. Shore.

The Western Cape MEC of Health and Wellness, Prof Nomafrrench Mbombo was in attendance and thanked Hear Us and Stellenbosch University for "taking up space and helping those in need, and we as government salute you."



More than R400 000 was raised, and we would like to thank the organizers and many sponsors of this event. May the wonder of sound continue to resonate in our souls and many more receive the gift of hearing through initiatives like these.



TWO OCEANS HALF MARATHON 2023:

RUN FOR HEAR US:



Thirteen runners ran the Two Oceans Half marathon on 16 April 2023 in order to raise funds for Hear Us and awareness of cochlear implants.

The charity run was organised by Ashleigh and Nicole Bredevelde and the runners were cochlear implant users or people working with cochlear implant users, such as audiologists and speech therapists.

Together with ticket sales and donations, this event made close to R30,000 for Hear Us; we are so proud of all the runners and grateful for their participation.

If you are ready to run with purpose and want to join us for the 2024 Two Oceans Half Marathon or want to make a donation, get in touch with us or follow this link below:

<https://www.givengain.com/campaign/hearus-ttom-2024>

Email	Sherene.Labuschagne@westerncape.gov.za
Phone	082 350 5537 (Whatsapp preferable)
Website	www.hearus.org.za

RUN4HEARUS

TEENAGE CORNER:

BIANCE NAUDÉ AERIAL ACROBATIC STAR!



Bianca Naudé won a gold medal at the South African Championship of Performing Arts 2023 for Aerial Acrobatic Open and a bronze medal for Aerials Acrobatic Skills. She has been selected to represent South Africa at the World Championships.

Bianca is a bilateral cochlear implant recipient and her passion and drive to succeed makes us all proud!

KATE'S JOURNEY TO THE WORLD DEAF YOUTH GAMES - SWIMMING



15-year-old Kate Allwood, in Grade 10 at Somerset College, has been selected to compete in the first-ever World Deaf Youth Games in Sao Paulo, Brazil, from 14-20 January 2024.

Kate has managed to balance her academic responsibilities with rigorous swimming training and has

shown exceptional dedication and perseverance.

Kate will be accompanied by none other than Terence Parkin, a former Deaf Olympic medallist. Parkin's experience and accolades in swimming, especially as a deaf athlete, make him an ideal mentor and coach for Kate. His guidance is invaluable, and his presence is a significant boost for Kate as she prepares for the international stage. Kate's participation in the World Deaf Youth Games is not just a personal achievement; it represents a moment of pride for the Cochlear Implant community representing our country. Being selected to represent the nation on such a prestigious platform is a remarkable honour.

As Kate embarks on this exciting journey, she carries with her the support and best wishes of our community. Her story is a source of inspiration for young athletes, proving that hard work, determination, and passion can lead to extraordinary opportunities.

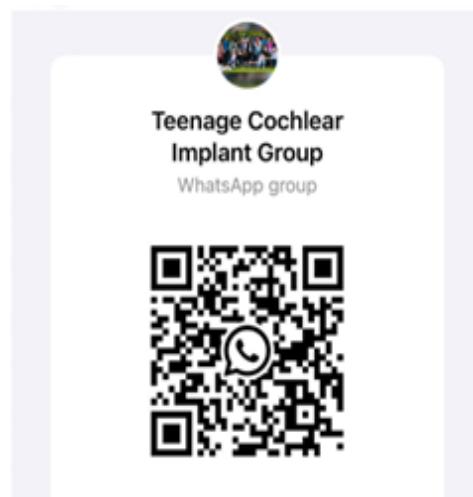
GREEN POINT TEENAGER “AMAZING RACE”



An Amazing race was hosted on 6 May 2023 for our Teenager Cochlear Implant Group at Green Point Park.

A group of teenagers attending different schools came together to have fun, connect with each other, share their personal experiences, form friendships, give support and learn more about their CI's.

All teenagers from our Cochlear Implant Unit are welcome to join our Teenager Group, follow this QR code to join the WhatsApp group for communication about our next event.



CONGRATULATIONS:



**MR DEAF
SA CHRISTO LOURENS**

Christo is the current Mr Deaf SA and represented our country at the Mr Deaf World Competition in Prague in July 2023.

Christo has been using a cochlear implant for 20 years and his message for others are to believe in yourself and pursue your dreams!

EDDIE TIPPETT COMPLETING THE CAPE TOWN MARATHON



THE TBH-SU CIP TEAM

Our expert clinical multi-disciplinary team includes Ear, Nose and Throat Surgeons, Audiologists, Speech-Language Therapists and Radiologists situated in different areas in Cape Town, Somerset West and Paarl. Our programme also has associations and access to a large number of other medical specialists, clinicians and educators.



Tygerberg Hospital is one of the largest tertiary public health facilities in the country to provide cochlear implants to and to manage both state and private patients. Our programme has expanded since it started in 1986 and Audiology services are also offered at private satellite clinics in Wynberg, Panorama, Bellville and Paarl. Around 60-70 life-changing procedures are carried out each year by the Cochlear Implant Programme team.

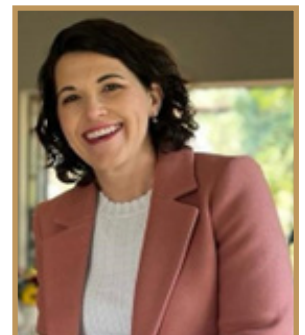
Our programme operates closely with the Carel du Toit Centre where children with hearing loss learn spoken language through the use of hearing technology, natural learning experiences and parental guidance. The centre comprises of a pre-school, primary school, and early intervention (CHAT) centre. Children under the age of 3 years are seen by an early intervention team at the CHAT Centre and once over the age of 3 years attend the school or are seen as regular visitors.

We want to welcome some new team members that joined our team throughout 2023:



Dr Gawie de Villiers (ENT)
at Vergelegen Hospital in
Somerset West

Nicolize Cass (Audiologist)
at Wynberg Satellite Unit



Dr Elias Pretorius (Radiologist)
at Morton & Partners



Dr Marc Merven (ENT) at
Tygerberg Hospital started
in a new role in 2023 as
Head of Otology and our
main implanting surgeon
for state patients.



Working with this team to provide the best care to our cochlear implant recipients is an honour.

IN MEMORIAM



Dyllan-Shaw Müller (No 454)

Born: 5 September 2007

Received his CI:

18 July 2012

† 24 April 2023



Kobus Greyling (No 255)

Born: 22 March 1953

Received his CI:

19 September 2005

† 9 August 2023



Gigi Montalbano (No 334)

Born: 26 June 1974

Received her CI:

17 July 2008

† 16 October 2023



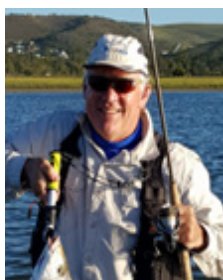
Lizanne Verheijen (No 891)

Born: 26 October 1955

Received her CI:

20 September 2021

† May 2023



Dr David Johnson (No148)

Born: 18 October 1957

Received his first CI:

27 October 1993

† 15 December 2023

Thank you



the HARRY CROSSLEY
foundation



HAFT

hear always foundation trust

Our team are extremely grateful for the donations received from the Harry Crossley Foundation and the Hear Always Foundation Trust (HAFT). Without these donations many needy patients would not have been able to be assisted with the "gift of hearing".

More than 155 patients have received donations from the Harry Crossley Foundation since 2008. These are the patients that received contributions in 2023:





A SOUTH AFRICAN COCHLEAR IMPLANT ASSOCIATION

HearUs is a registered and regulated non-profit organisation and operates in close association with the Tygerberg Hospital – Stellenbosch University Cochlear Implant Unit.

HearUs is grateful for any donations which are used to assist needy patients with the costs of their cochlear implant system, maintenance and other related needs. 18A tax certificates are available on request.

Donations to HearUs can be sent to:

Account holder: HearUs
Bank: ABSA
Branch: Durbanville
Branch code: 632005
Account number: 4053388469
Swift code: ABSA ZA JJ

Make a difference, donate, and give someone the gift of hearing via SnapScan:



E-mail: hearusnpo@gmail.com

www.hearus.org.za

Follow us on social media:

Instagram: @HearUsZa

Facebook: @Hearus_cochlearimplants_za

MySchool is a fundraising programme able to raise funds for various charities and schools including HearUs.

By listing HearUs as a beneficiary on your MySchool card you will automatically raise funds for HearUs when swiping your card at participating stores.

Scan to support us



Charitable bequests: leave a lasting legacy

A charitable bequest is a donation from your deceased estate to a charity/ charitable organisation as specified in your will.

Should you wish to acquire further information about bequeathing donations to HearUs as a beneficiary please contact Lida Müller: amum@sun.ac.za/ 021 938 5080.