



ALL EARS

Autumn 2013

Who are we?

Established in 1998, EARS Inc. is an Australian, not-for-profit, Christian association dedicated to reducing the impact of deafness and increasing access to hearing care through training and equipping health workers and teachers in developing countries.

If you would like to support our work, become a member (it's free!), donate money, pass on second-hand hearing aids and equipment, and/or volunteer your skills.

URGENT NEEDS

- Fundraisers
- Laptop for Tuks in Fiji for setting up hearing aids (see Donna's Update)
- Scholarships for ABC students in Malawi to pay fees
- 10 USB Hi-Pros
- Conference fees for Donna

Donations are tax deductible and can be made securely through the GiveNow link (type in 'Ears' in Search) on our website. For more information, visit www.earsinc.org, email admin@earsinc.org, or call David Pither on 03 9654 5511 (BH).

President's report

It was wonderful to have Rebecca and Peter Bartlett and Donna Carkeet back in Australia over Christmas. It meant the EARS Inc. board could meet in Melbourne in December, so much easier without the technical glitches of our usual Skype meetings. We discussed many things including 'field' reports (the young Bartlett girls did a wonderful job of describing their life in Malawi), membership issues, promoting EARS Inc., communication, changes to our constitution and funding challenges.

It was great to showcase our work through an oral paper and poster at the Audiology Australia conference in July last year. I will be attending the American Academy of Audiology Annual Convention in California in April and the Coalition for Global Hearing Health Conference in May on behalf of EARS Inc. While in the US I will spend time with Donna discussing her future work and meeting with Medical Ministry International.

Operating with only volunteers, we are motivated by our desire to serve God through this ministry and make a real difference in the lives of hearing impaired in 'underserved' countries. Most of the children and adults who benefit from our work will never meet us, but we know the people we work with and train in developing countries will continue to touch and improve the lives of many for years to come.

David Pither, President EARS Inc.



Donna's update

After a few 'recovery' months in Australia, EARS Inc. audiologist Donna Carkeet headed back overseas in February.

In Fiji, Donna caught up with former student Tukana who now operates three clinics. Power blackouts and floods often interrupt his work, so 'off-line' solutions were explored. Being the only audiologist in Fiji and newly trained, Tuks appreciated the advice, training and support Donna offered him in her short time there.

With the completion of the audiology training project in the Dominican Republic, Donna met with the team at Medical Ministry International (MMI) in San Francisco to discuss her new role as Director of Audiology. She has also been

Donna with Madison



working on a proposal to Hear The World for funding for screening equipment for Peru, Bolivia and Colombia.

In March Donna arrived in the Dominican Republic to a time of mixed emotions as she reunited with her adopted son Madison, wrapped up the seven-year training project, and worked with the University to have the audiology course approved. Local audiology graduates will take over running the hearing clinics, with distant support from Donna.



Graduates from Donna's audiology course celebrate their success

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EARS Inc.: making a difference



Two year old Finneas was seen by Bec Bartlett earlier this year at the ABC Clinic in Malawi. He was extremely sick when he was born and finally came to the clinic because he was not responding to sounds. A severe to profound hearing loss was detected using the new ABR/ASSR equipment from Sonova's Hear The World funding. This special equipment assesses hearing through detecting the brain's response to sounds and made it relatively easy to assess this toddler's hearing.

Finneas was quite happy to wear the behind the ear hearing aid when it was fitted a couple of weeks later. He seemed to enjoy listening and hearing his own voice.

This delightful little boy's prospects for language and education are now much more rosy, thanks to EARS and Sonova.

Sonova's non-profit Hear the World Foundation advocates equal opportunities and improved quality of life for people with hearing loss around the world. EARS Inc. is very grateful to Hear The World for their generous support over the last four years.

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April and May will be busy months for Donna, attending the AAA and Coalition for Global Hearing Health conferences and meeting the CEO of MMI with David Pither.

Donna would appreciate prayer for the exciting possibilities and responsibilities ahead this year and into the future.

To find out about the amazing work of MMI, go to www.mmint.org.

News from Africa

In November 2012, Bec, Peter and their three daughters returned to Australia to spend two months catching up with friends and family, sharing their journey and needs, and taking a well-earned break.

They returned to Malawi in January 2013 to the usual host of challenges and joys.

Six students are still participating in the audiology course which Bec coordinates, although life and financial pressures don't make it easy for them. Peter managed to raise enough funds from supporters to retain one student who couldn't afford the college fees, but this is an ongoing need. The students have just completed their mid-semester exams and all have done well.

An unreliable car has made visits to outreach centres in schools and health clinics difficult, but there are plans to improve this situation.



Audio booths and cabinetry arrive for installation in the new clinic

Construction of the Hearing Clinic and Training Centre continues to consume Pete's time and energy as he sources materials and equipment and then ensures it is stored securely when it arrives, as thefts are common. It has been a difficult process to chase up items, keep suppliers to deadlines and coordinate deliveries. A container load of supplies including audioboosts and cabinetry has recently arrived from South Africa, so the internal fit-out is able to begin.



The HCTC is on track to open in June this year.

Lois with villagers during an outreach visit



Not taken for granted...

When the Bartletts asked Lois and Ian Grant if they could look after their program while they returned to Australia for a few months, doors opened and they found themselves in Malawi in November 2012.

Lois provided some audiology services at the clinic, trained students and conducted outreach visits to local communities. She especially enjoyed teaching the students about paediatric audiology, although had to teach with new ABR/ASSR equipment which arrived the day before the Bartletts went on leave. This equipment helps diagnose hearing loss and fit hearing aids so much more effectively to younger children. [See Finneas' story on this page.]

Ian's role was carrying bags for Lois, working three days a week with World Vision and regular visits to the new hearing clinic to make sure everything was on track. He also managed to collaborate with local institutions to help improve productivity of local chickens, to improve diets for children and livelihoods for poor farmers.



Ian with village leaders

Ian and Lois felt privileged to walk in Pete and Bec's shoes. They were amazed how much this couple have achieved in only two years and how highly the family is regarded by local and expatriate communities.

WANTED: Volunteers for Egypt

If you are an audiologist with paediatric experience and interested in a trip to Egypt later this year, please contact David Pither for more information.