



President's Piece

The World Congress of Audiology, held over four days in Brisbane in May, was a wonderful opportunity for us to promote EARS Inc. through our table at the 'Hear for the Future' expo, two papers by Peter Bartlett and our Annual General Meeting on 7th May.

EARS board members Peter, Marg Anderson, my wife Sheryl and I attended and we were encouraged to hear positive feedback about our organisation, and that 14 people signed up for membership during the conference.

Over 20 people attended our AGM, pretty good considering it started at 7.30am. The current board agreed to continue: myself as President, Peter Bartlett—Vice-President, Marg Anderson—Secretary, Sheryl Pither—Treasurer, Donna Carkeet and Margaret Dewberry—ordinary board members. We are delighted to welcome **Judith Francis** back onto the EARS Inc. board after two years absence.

At the AGM we presented our six focus areas for the next 12 months and those who are responsible for each 'portfolio':



From left: David and Sheryl Pither, Rosie Leslie (former board member), Tukana (Tuks), Marg Anderson & Peter Bartlett. Inset: Margaret Dewberry (L), Donna Carkeet & Judith Francis

EARS services (Peter), prayer intercessors (David), funding (Donna), membership (Marg A), volunteers (Judith) and partnerships (Margaret D). Several people showed interest in finding out how they could be involved.

Rebecca Bartlett and I represented EARS Inc. at the 5th annual meeting of the Coalition for Global Hearing Health (CGHH) Conference in Oxford, UK, 25-26 July. Rebecca gave a terrific presentation on "*Determining the Prevalence and Severity of Hearing Impairment in HIV-infected Children in Lilongwe, Malawi*" which was very well received. Next year's CGHH conference

will be held in Washington in May and I recommend it as a fantastic opportunity to network with passionate people doing extraordinary work on hearing-related projects throughout the world.

The theme of this edition of **ALL EARS** is volunteering and you'll read stories of some intrepid overseas volunteers. We are deeply grateful for their donation of time and skills to our fieldwork.

But we would like you to think about what you can also offer EARS 'back home'. Judith shares some ideas in her article *Volunteers are our heart* and we profile a few locals who are offering us their time and skills. We are a small organisation with a handful of voluntary board members, and although we have achieved amazing results through dedication, sacrifice, the generosity of many individuals, practical help and prayer since we were established in 1998, who knows what we can do with even more people, resources and prayer?

God's grace and peace be with you all,

David Pither, President, EARS Inc.

Donna's Update

After injuring my ankle in Haiti in April, I have had a few months with my new best friend the moon boot! I finally got out of it (part-time) in August. Yes, 5 months later. I had surgery to insert pins and bands around the bones at the end of June because the ligaments still had not healed. This has stabilised the ankle enough for me to finally start physiotherapy twice a week to get the ankle strong enough so I can get back out into the field. At this stage I am not sure how long this will be or what the next project will be. Meanwhile I have been visiting churches and other groups to promote the work of EARS here in Australia, as well as teaching on a NSW TAFE audiometry course and helping my son Madison settle into life in Australia. I have been blessed to be back at my church and with family and friends. Their support and encouragement has been wonderful. Please pray for future plans and that my period of being mobility-restricted will be a time of rest, rebuilding connections, and preparation of my heart and mind for the next tasks God has for me.



...is an Australian, not-for-profit, Christian association dedicated to assisting children and adults affected by hearing impairment and deafness in developing countries.

EARS Inc. partners with local agencies to train and equip health workers and teachers to rehabilitate people with hearing loss and help them become self-sufficient and independent. Our philosophy is to build local capacity and establish sustainable programs.

Volunteers are our heart...

By Judith Francis, EARS Inc. board member

EARS Inc. would not exist without people donating their time and skills, and I am excited to take on the role of responsibility for our volunteer's portfolio. My challenge is to develop a process to match skills and availability of volunteers with the needs of various short and long term projects. I will be working on this over the next twelve months.

Who am I? My name is Judith Francis. I have worked as an audiologist since 1998 amongst other life events such as having three children and living in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates. My first introduction to EARS Inc. was while chatting with David Pither in a lunch queue at a conference. The work of EARS fitted perfectly with my desire to use my skills to show God's love to people in need, and my husband and I participated in an EARS training visit to India in 2001. We loved it. I returned from another training trip to the Philippines in 2003 with a passion for ensuring these brief trips resulted in long term benefits for the people. This led me to serve on the EARS Inc. Board from 2005 to 2012. In 2007 my family visited Donna Carkeet in the Dominican Republic to provide on-site support for her work. It was so exciting to see someone working and living full-time on a project!

How can you help?

In Australia

Fundraising is our biggest area of need! It is not as exciting as travelling overseas, but a lack of resources seriously limits the reach and effectiveness of our projects. We are looking for people with enthusiasm, creativity and time to help us raise funds regularly to support our projects. Would you like to join the dynamic fundraising team headed by Donna Carkeet?

If you have skills in general administration, marketing, accounting/book keeping, can offer us legal advice and would like to volunteer your time, we'd like to hear from you too.

Overseas

Long-term projects established with a partner organisation in a developing country benefit greatly from short-term injections of skills and experience through visiting clinicians and trainers. In return for their services, volunteers have the unique opportunity to visit a developing country and experience life, not as a tourist, but as a guest of the local people. Some examples of assistance provided by volunteers are:

- teaching students in the classroom
- supervising students in the clinic
- providing extra clinicians for the start-up of a particular program (eg. screening programs)
- training students or local workers in a specialized topic (e.g. making earmoulds, repairing hearing aids)
- relief and moral support for field workers
- transporting equipment

Please note that, although EARS Inc. will assist in any way we can with finding accommodation and support, volunteers are expected to fund their own travel. EARS Inc. also require field volunteers to be a member of our organisation. Membership forms are on our website www.earsinc.org/be_involved.

If you are interested in volunteering with EARS, contact me for an EARS Inc. Volunteers Information Package at j.r.francis@bigpond.com or email admin@earsinc.org.

Entertainment Book fundraiser

The **Entertainment™ Book** is a local restaurant and activity guide that includes over \$20,000 worth of valuable 2-for-1 and up to 50% offers from many of the best restaurants, arts, attractions, hotel accommodation, travel and much more! You can buy one for your area, or give it as a gift to your friends or family if they live in Australia or NZ - even Johannesburg!

Memberships are available in two formats: the traditional **Entertainment™ Book Membership** that comes with the Entertainment™ Gold Card and vouchers or the new **Entertainment™ Digital Membership** that puts the value of the Entertainment™ Book into your iPhone or Android smartphone.

The Entertainment™ Book costs between \$55 and \$70 (depending on location) and vouchers are valid through to 1 June 2015. 20% of every book sold goes to Ears Inc. For more information or order a book online, go to www.entertainmentbook.com.au/orderbooks/169s133.

Note: if you order a Book Membership before 30th September, you'll receive free delivery!



Local EARS heroes

Here are some examples of Australian volunteers who are supporting our work here.

Kate Wilson is an audiologist in Wollongong NSW who became a member of EARS earlier this year. She has a young family but was still keen to help us in some way. When asked if she could help us revamp our website, we didn't realise her husband Grant has designed a number of websites before and was keen to help too. This couple are such an answer to prayer.

Katrina Light in South Australia put up her hand to be on Donna's fundraising team and to organise sales of the popular Entertainment™ Book. 20% of every membership sold contributes to EARS Inc., and has been a welcome source of income for us. (See how to order the Book on page 2.)

Paul Flynn from Procal Technologies in Victoria charges us a nominal fee to calibrates audiological equipment donated for use overseas and gives us free technical advice. A few years ago he spent a week training our students to calibrate audiometers for air and bone conduction in the Dominican Republic. .

Jim Thompson is an audiologist in Tamworth NSW and is our new prayer coordinator. He believes the work of Ears Inc. is valuable from an eternal perspective as well as a health one. If you would like to be part of an intercession team that receives urgent prayer requests and regular update reports, he would love to hear from you. Email Jim on jimmthompson80@gmail.com.

EARS DR work in print

An article on the EARS project in the Dominican Republic has been published in the Journal of Disability and Rehabilitation.

The article, titled '*Developing self-sustainable hearing centers in the developing world – case study of EARS Inc. project in Dominican Republic*', describes and analyses EARS audiologist Donna Carkeet's training and service program which resulted in increased access to hearing care and more affordable hearing technology in the DR.

If you're interested in reading it, the article can be accessed from www.informahealthcare.com (type in the title of the article in Search).

EARS work on show at international conference



Peter Bartlett presented two papers at the World Congress of Audiology in Brisbane in May:

'Determining the Prevalence and Severity of Hearing Impairment in HIV-Infected Children in Lilongwe, Malawi' and *'Evaluating audiology program models initiated in a developing country context – experiences from Malawi'*. Both were well attended and received.

First audiologist in Fiji

Sevanaia Ratumaitavuki Tukana—or Tuks as we call him—is from Fiji and is a former student of Donna's Dominican Republic course. He was sponsored by EARS to attend the World Congress of Audiology in Brisbane in May. At our AGM he spoke about the impact of EARS.

I came to know Donna and EARS Inc. in 2006 when I joined my wife in Dominican Republic where she was doing her residency in ophthalmology at Dr. Elias Santana Hospital.

Donna was one of the first people I met when I came to the country. It was the first time for me to hear too about audiology and that a department called Audiology exists in almost every hospital in developed countries. For me coming from Fiji this was something totally new.

I later joined Donna's audiology course in 2007 and was one of the first groups of students who graduated two years later. Since then I have never regretted taking up the course. Now I'm back home in Fiji and I am the only one in my country doing Audiology. I have had many difficulties and challenges but being a Christian and part of EARS Inc. has helped me overcome and get through the challenges I face.



Tuks with EARS President David Pither at the WCA

Help us help people hear

EARS Inc. aims to provide ongoing training and support to local workers in health clinics, hospitals, deaf schools and mission groups in developing countries, to empower them with the necessary skills and equipment to rehabilitate people with hearing loss. There are a number of ways you can help.

- **Become a member** of EARS. See our website for membership forms.
- **Donate money.** Tax-deductible donations can be made through the GiveNow link on the Donate page on our website. Maybe consider a bequest to EARS.
- **Donate equipment.** We need audiological equipment and hearing aids (second hand is fine) to equip our clinics and graduates.
- **Join our fundraising committee.**
- **Volunteer.** We need hearing professionals to provide training and hearing services overseas. Technicians are also needed to check and calibrate equipment.

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ABC Hearing Clinic and Training Centre, Malawi

EARS Inc. audiologists Peter and Bec Bartlett are responsible for establishing the first audiology clinic in Malawi in sub-Saharan Africa. Opened less than a year ago, the clinic is well equipped, with an adult and paediatric sound booth for diagnostic testing, objective hearing assessment equipment (OAE, ABR and ASSR), and a laboratory where custom earmoulds are made on-site. The staff also travels to various parts of the country, visiting health clinics and schools and providing treatment for adults and children with hearing loss who cannot travel to the clinic in Lilongwe.

In the past year alone, the ABC clinic has examined 2,000 people and fitted more than 400 hearing aids.

'Challenging, exhilarating and fulfilling'

By Rosanna Morrison, audiologist from Broken Hill in Victoria, Australia

Muli Bwanji! The ABC clinic in Lilongwe became my home for five months in 2013. I loved having the opportunity to learn from Peter and Rebecca and take my first steps into volunteering. I was able to experience a wide variety of clinical situations, from working in the main clinic in Lilongwe to visiting the Embangweni school for the deaf and visiting the hospital in Blantyre. It truly is an amazing experience to be able to spend the week helping people to hear, and then spend the weekend on safari watching elephants! The time I spent in Malawi completely changed my outlook on my own clinical practice, and on my future career plans. It was challenging, exhilarating and fulfilling in all areas and I would strongly recommend it to anyone!



Rosanna testing out in the field



Taking the mobile booth out to villages with Bec Bartlett

Bartlett's update - in brief

By Peter Bartlett, Malawi, Africa

- Our three daughters Elouise (grade 2) Brianna (grade 7), Jessica (grade 9) started back at school last month for the start of the new year.
- Four ABC graduates who have been audiology trained are now working with us as assistants under our licence. Another two returned to ABC to complete some core units they missed in first year (late starters). We started audiology minor course training for another group of six 3rd year ABC students.
- No progress with Bachelor of Science in audiology course curriculum development but we have a science teacher coming Oct - Dec to teach basic sciences.
- We've had and will have several visitors: Katie Kerns (3rd year doctorate in audiology student from Ohio) was here for 2 weeks in August; Erin Robertson (undergraduate from Mississippi) is here from August to 23rd Nov; Ian Henderson from Oz is here for a week mid October; and Helen Brough from the UK will be here in October for two months.
- First Cochlear Implant surgeries for Malawi in Blantyre this month. Bec does switch-on in late October.
- Hear The World photographic workshop with hearing impaired teenagers late October



All six ABC students successfully graduated from the audiology program

- Our church growth group on a Tuesday night regularly has over ten members and there is a healthy sense of sharing, honesty and respect in the relationships.
- I am now coordinating the ABC Wednesday night bible study and fellowship time which we have called Wednesday Connection. We're endeavouring to develop communication, community and commitment to God and each other.

Would you like to sponsor a student or donate to the work of EARS Inc. in Malawi?

Go to the EARS Inc. website for options for giving: <http://www.earsinc.org/donation.html>.

Donations are automatically tax deductible in the USA to ABC, as it is registered as a tax deductible charity: <https://www.africanbiblecolleges.net/onlinegifts/>.

June is US student month at ABC

By Dr Ingrid BcBride, Clinical Associate Professor of Audiology at Arizona State University, USA

Hearing for Humanity (HFH) is a program at Arizona State University that provides a unique clinical experience and opportunity for Doctor of Audiology students from Arizona State University to provide humanitarian audiology in very challenging settings. Since 2010 HFH has spent four one-month periods working with EARS Inc. in Malawi (June 2010, 2012, 2013, and 2014). The HFH/EARS team has seen a total of 2764 children/adults and fit 748 hearing aids. The experience in Malawi gives students the opportunity to refine their clinical skills and to gain exposure to ear conditions that would seldom be seen in most clinics in the USA. More importantly, the experience teaches students cultural competency and how to implement a sustainable and ethical humanitarian audiology program.

Two ASU Au.D students who were part of the 2014 HFH team, summarize their experience below:

“I was fortunate to spend 5 weeks in Malawi working with the ABC Hearing Clinic. During my time there, I had the opportunity to assist in many outreach clinics in local villages and various cities throughout Malawi. The ABC Hearing Clinic has an amazing staff of clinicians and students who have pioneered the movement of educating the people of Malawi about hearing health and wellness. Their dedication to providing quality care to those who seek their services is exemplary. I can truly say that my time spent at the ABC Hearing Clinic was an unforgettable experience. I most definitely look forward to working with them again in the future.” - Rozela Melgoza

“When I reflect on my experience with the HFH team in Malawi, I am humbled by how much positive influence a few people can have on so many. I specifically remember arriving to each clinic site and every day seeing a line of endless people hoping to receive our audiological services. It is truly difficult to fathom the need for audiological services in countries such as Malawi. Sure, the days were long and exhausting but nothing compares to the gratitude and appreciation each patient expressed to our team. I find it impossible to put into words the rewarding, humbling, and life-changing experiences volunteering in the field of audiology has to offer unless you can experience it yourself.” - Paige Tatge

Please read our 2014 blog (gailbelus.wordpress.com) to learn more about how volunteering made an impact on the students who participated. Visit our website at www.hearingforhumanity.org for more information about our program.



Rozela Melgoza tested many children during an outreach clinic.



Paige Tatge checks a child's middle ear health at a special needs school.



Canadian tech expert shares his skills



Paul applied his technical expertise to solve a number of technical issues

Paul Darkes, Manager of Program Management at Unitron, Canada, travelled to Malawi as part of Sonova's Hear The World Foundation. Paul brought his extensive knowledge of hearing aids and program management to the ABC Hearing Clinic, equipping locals with new skills to provide better solutions for conductive hearing loss, perform their own hearing aid repairs, and reach more people with solutions for hearing loss.

“I have enjoyed a long career in the hearing healthcare industry and fully appreciate the benefits hearing aids bring to someone's life,” said Paul. “The small team at the ABC clinic are conducting truly pioneer work to bring health healthcare to the people of Malawi, who otherwise would have little or no access to audiological care and rehabilitation. Having the opportunity to go to Malawi and be of help to those who are directly serving people in great need is very satisfying,” he added.

UK audiologist helps out

By Liz Harnett, audiologist, Hear The World, UK

In May this year I was very lucky to be able to spend one week working with Rebecca Bartlett at the ABC hearing clinic in Lilongwe, Malawi. Despite my visit being quite brief, it is an experience I shall take with me for a long time.

I was very fortunate to see the amazing work Rebecca and Peter have done there, not only setting up the first hearing clinic facility in Malawi but also facilitating the training of Audiology students to enable the maintenance and development of the service long term.

Thanks to the support of Hear the World, the clinic offers remarkable facilities to enable the testing and management of patients of all ages in a comfortable and professional environment. During my time there I was fortunate enough to see several patients for diagnosis, hearing aid fitting and pre/post surgical hearing assessment. I was also able to use my current technical support role to assist with some software issues the clinic was having.

It is evident from patient feedback the difference this service makes to the local community. Due to the clinic offering a one-stop shop for hearing testing, hearing aid fitting, wax removal and ear mould production, it ensures patients are given an exemplary service. As part of my visit I also had the chance to visit other local facilities and villages where there is the potential to offer outreach services such as hearing screening in schools and a permanent Audiology room at a hospital in neighbouring Mjinchi.

During my stay in the ABC campus I was made to feel very welcome by both staff and locals and I was able to experience a lot of the local sights and attractions. I am pleased I was able to volunteer my skills to this project and certainly would encourage others to do the same!



Ears are different in Malawi!

By Nasreen Hussain & Amman Gill, audiologists, Sound Seekers, UK

Following a 12-hour flight of bad food, travel pillows and movies, we had finally arrived in Malawi. All the preparation and anticipation for the trip was now over. We were warmly welcomed to Lilongwe by Peter Bartlett and Alinane Mtonya who made our volunteering experience so memorable.

We spent three weeks working at the African Bible College Hearing Clinic and Training Centre alongside six Malawian students training in audiology. Although the day-to-day activities at the clinic were not too different from what we had experienced working in London, the ears we looked in were very different! In the United Kingdom, patients are able to readily visit a doctor when they have concerns about their ears. Common ear infections in Malawi can go untreated for long periods of time, making these services all the more valuable.



Amman (left) and Nasreen with the 'beloved yellow 4x4 mobile clinic'.

It was challenging and enjoyable conducting hearing tests in our beloved yellow 4x4 mobile clinic. It came with us to hearing screenings at a factory and numerous village outreach clinics. It was an incredible experience visiting such unfamiliar places but Malawi itself did not feel so unfamiliar and that is a credit to our colleagues who are now friends.

Volunteering as an audiologist abroad exposes you to weird and wonderful cases but it was the people we

befriended along the way that made it hard to leave.

Sound Seekers is dedicated to helping deaf and hearing-impaired people, especially children, in the developing world. They develop and support projects that improve access to education, lessen the impact of hearing loss and raise awareness of deaf people's abilities and needs.

Christmas gift idea

Through the ABC Hearing Clinic and Training Centre, EARS Inc. is enabling many people in Malawi to be hearing again. Purchase a Villa Hunter hand-printed 'Malawi Sound Waves' 100% Linen Tea Towel and half of the purchase price will go direct to the EARS Inc. project in Malawi. At about \$10, this is an ideal Christmas gift. Dimensions: 50cm x 70cm. They can be shipped worldwide. Order directly at https://www.etsy.com/au/listing/198776392/linen-tea-towel-malawi-africa-fundraiser?ref=ss_listing&ulsfg=true or email the maker Krystle directly at krystle@villahunter.com.au.



You can keep in touch with latest happenings by becoming our 'friend' on the EARS Facebook page.