

ALL EARS



EARS inc.

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Some things are worth waiting for!!!

Presenting EARS Inc.'s second newsletter for your reading pleasure.....

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What's been happening?

EARS Inc. continues to provide low cost and second hand hearing aids to needy hearing impaired children and adults through their network of contact clinics in developing countries. One of the most exciting aspects of this is that an increasing number of Christian Audiologists in Australia are taking significant amounts of time away from their paid employment to provide clinical support on a voluntary basis as they are called and encouraged to do so. In this way, workers are being raised up for the harvest field.

As any five year old will tell you, *growing up is hard work* – and that may be the best way of describing some of the administrative developments EARS has undergone since being incorporated in December 1998. We have needed some administrative assistance to cope with this, and have been fortunate enough to have the voluntary services of Jim Bambery one day a week, for some time now.

President David Pither has been liaising with members of a variety of other mission organisations to work collaboratively, as a group called Co-Aid, in our application to the government for tax deductibility status and Aus-Aid funding. This has also broadened our network of partner organisations that may require our assistance in helping any deaf and hearing impaired people that they work with.

David and board member toolmaker Mark Fry travelled to Botswana last March for meetings, aid development and ear mould making training. They even met the President of Botswana; a keen supporter of the disabled.

Good progress has been made regarding the development of our low cost, solar powered body level hearing aid and we are now ready to produce this aid in Australia.

The intrepid NSW Audiologist Donna Carkeet who spent 12 months overseas (2002/3) is preparing once again to trip around the world to EARS clinic locations in countries including the Dominican Republic, India and the Philippines. In her last trip, Donna was joined by Alison Boorman & Matthew Gambell (India), Judy & David Francis (the Philippines) and Emma & Andy May (Cambodia). All have great stories to tell and many will meet up with Donna in these places in 2004.

Donna is currently completing NSW TAFE trainer accreditation, with the view to training people with certification in a number of clinics throughout 2004, and then heading up a hospital-based training facility in the Dominican Republic from 2005-2008.

Donna will train staff at the Medical Ministries International (MMI) hospital in the Dominican Republic and many others through the MMI network internationally.

With MMI being a strong Christian organisation, this will allow great opportunity for a practical expression of the gospel in many nations.

Meet the V.P.



The Vice-President of EARS Inc. (*and self appointed editor of All EARS*) is Peter Bartlett. He writes: "Hi everyone! Thanks for your interest and involvement with EARS to date. My wife Rebecca (also an Audiologist) and I live in Ballarat with our two darling and energetic daughters Jessica and Brianna. We are part of the community at York Street Church of Christ and I am a volunteer with the Ballarat unit of the State Emergency Service. As District Manager of Australian Hearing in Ballarat, I attempt to balance the challenges of clinical work and management - with mixed success. My best stress reliever is a long run on a country road.

In 1997, on a mission trip in the Philippines, David Pither first shared with me some of his hopes and dreams for producing affordable hearing aids and establishing locally run hearing clinics in developing countries. It soon became evident that a number of people were being drawn together to use their God-given skills, resources and time to make a difference in the lives of those deaf and hearing impaired that receive no help or rehabilitation. I desperately

wanted to use my audiology training to reach people in need.

Since then, Rebecca and I have looked for opportunities to do this as God has allowed; the most significant event being our 6 month trip to 10 locations in the second half of 1999. My prayer is that many more Christian Audiologists would look beyond our own shores to the unmet needs in nations where hearing help and the gospel are not readily available. Whatever your talents, we can all make a significant contribution to the ministry of EARS.

Having just received in the mail this week from David Pither, one of the first completed circuit boards for the first EARS solar powered body aid, I couldn't help but think how close we are getting to a significant breakthrough and expansion. For those who have worked tirelessly to reach this first production stage, there must be an extraordinary excitement and anticipation; with the knowledge that there is plenty of hard work still left to do."

Did you know?.....

- We are currently in the process of establishing an EARS Inc website at www.earsinc.org
- A group of EARS Inc. volunteers had a 2 day training weekend in late August 2003 where they underwent training in ear mould making, paediatric assessment and had the opportunity to upgrade training materials, discuss projects and share their thoughts and dreams. Special thanks to Donna, Judy and David for travelling interstate primarily for the training event – what commitment!!
- EARS is keen to receive second hand hearing aids (Behind The Ear and Body aids) which are still in good working order, so that they can be refitted overseas. Donations of second hand equipment (audiometers, otoscopes etc.) in good working order is also most highly valued and appreciated.

Membership

We are hoping in 2004 to consolidate and expand our membership supporter base, and ensure we have current contact details, including email addresses, for all members. So spread the word and get people on board so they too can be a part of the great things happening through EARS. You might also like to keep an eye out for public speaking opportunities on behalf of EARS.

Due to administration, insurance and organisational costs, the EARS board will propose at our next AGM in late April to introduce an annual fee of \$20 for all supporters who are able to be financial members of EARS Inc. If we as a membership can cover these running costs, we will be able to ensure that all donations from churches, groups and individuals can be specifically allocated to purchase hearing aids, materials and resources for use at the coal face.

We will continue to welcome non-financial membership for those who are unable to afford such a fee but who are keen to support EARS Inc. in prayer or in other ways. At the same time we would welcome any regular or one-off payments to EARS Inc. that you wish to make; remembering that EARS now has tax deductibility status for our overseas work.

Volunteers Wanted... **Find a job that's right for you!**

Administration

Given the increasing demands to appropriately manage all paperwork, we are looking for someone to support Jim Bambery with routine administrative tasks, record keeping and assistance in consolidating our membership details.

Hearing Aid Assemblers

With all circuit board components now sourced and purchased for the production of around 200 solar powered body level hearing aid, we require volunteers with soldering skills to solder 'insert by hand' components in to the circuit board.

Solicitor

The EARS Inc constitution needs to be fully reviewed by an appropriately qualified legal representative; with any amendments from previous board meetings and AGM's officially adopted, written up and presented.

Project Officer

To comply with Commonwealth Government overseas aid guidelines, as part of the wider group of Christian organisations known as Co-Aid, we need to submit project planning proposals for each separate site that EARS Inc volunteers support.

Given that the world of log frames and project designs is not familiar to many, we are seeking a special person, with administration and planning skills, to become our Project Officer. Ideally, the volunteer would have had experience submitting project applications to government bodies (Eg. AusAid) and be able to map out service delivery plans, goals and development

Audiologists

As usual there are dozens of locations requiring an Audiologist to support them in their hearing clinic or mould making facility. Further on-site training is vital, to ensure the skills of those already trained are maintained and improved upon. This is particularly important when diagnosing hearing loss in children. Many of the skills are practical in nature.

Those listed below are just some of the opportunities available at this time.

- China – An organisation called Health For China (HFC) is ready for us to establish a clinical and mould making facility, to train their local workers in hearing assessment and rehabilitation and to provide this to other sites in China. Go to their website www.hfc-cfcc.org, if you are interested in finding out more about the work of HFC.
- Bali (Indonesia) – The deaf school in Bali has an earmould making lab set up already but needs children properly tested and appropriately fitted.

- Ethiopia – The ear mould set up is established however they require an Audiologist to fit the Behind The Ear hearing aids that have already been donated/supplied to them. There are several opportunities in the African region including Botswana, Kenya, Namibia and Zambia
- A few Pacific Islands near Australia such as the Solomon Islands, Kiribas & Vanuatu may have need for visitation in 2004.
- With Donna visiting the Dominican Republic, India, the Philippines and possibly some other Asian nations such as Cambodia and Vietnam, all in the next 12 months, there are opportunities to work cooperatively with Donna in these locations . I'm sure Donna would appreciate your company and support.

Hearing Aid development

Production of the completed circuit board, including a Genum circuit chip, designed by Harvey Dillon, Jon Holton and David Pither, has begun. The external casing is not quite right at the moment, so the casting of the dye is currently undergoing modifications. The button receiver of the aid also seems problematic at the moment regarding robustness, distortion and output, so this is being investigated.

We have enough components awaiting assembly, for nearly 200 units. The body aid has a rechargeable battery which is solar charged. It features automatic gain control, dual output for binaural listening with a balance control, an on/off volume wheel and adjustable trimpots for output and low cut.

We will initially assemble these aids in Australia, however expressions of interest have been received from organisations in China and India to assemble aids in these countries. This may be beneficial to EARS if it ensures import taxes are not incurred for fittings in these countries.

\$40 provides a hearing aid

EARS relies on donations to support clinics in developing countries with materials, aids, equipment and personnel. We have been able to source various Body-level and Behind The Ear hearing aids for around \$40 each, in the last few years. It is incredible that a \$40 device can make such a difference in the life of a hearing impaired person. Please consider becoming a regular financial partner of EARS, to ensure that many more will receive the gift of hearing.

He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

EARS Inc – Donations

MY DETAILS:

Title:____Name:_____

Address:_____

State:_____Postcode_____

Ph: () _____

Fax: () _____

Email: _____

I PREFER TO GIVE BY:

cheque / money order
(please make payable to EARS Inc.)

Please debit my credit card:

Bankcard / Mastercard / Visa / Amex / Diners

Card Number:

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Expiry Date on the card: ____/____

Signature:_____

This payment / authorisation is for:

A single gift of \$ _____

A monthly payment of \$ _____