



## President's Piece

In the past year, volunteers from Australia, United Kingdom, USA and Canada have visited projects, sometimes spending a month or more working with our people. Donna Carkeet and Madison Linares Carkeet were delighted to see first-hand how the Dominican Republic project is being capably managed by local leaders during their visit in 2018. Donna still provides some long-distance support.

Donna's exemplary work was recognised when she was awarded Humanitarian of the Year at the Audiology Australia Conference in May 2018. So deep is her commitment to her projects, she continues to live on a shoestring as she visits Fiji and PNG instead of engaging in regular paid work in Australia.

Peter Bartlett sacrifices one day a week of paid employment to EARS Inc. and his

family, and he and Rebecca continue to oversee the work in Malawi with the aid of the internet and regular trips to the country. Rebecca is in contact with the hearing clinic almost daily.

The year 2019 sees major expansion of work in PNG and Fiji. Donna has committed considerably more of her time to working overseas and is currently underfunded by about 60%. We have sent two more audiometers to the Congo with Prue and David Boyd and were blessed to have them at the EARS Inc. 20th birthday celebration dinner in May.

Our close and effective partnerships with the Frank Hilton Foundation in Fiji, The African Bible College in Malawi and Hear the World Foundation mean we can achieve so much more than if we worked alone. Hear The World has been particularly generous in financially supporting several of our projects.

Donna and I are looking forward to attending the Coalition for Global

Hearing Health Conference in Tempe, Arizona, on 25-27 October. We are hoping to have Miguel Evangelista in Tempe with us. He is the head of the Dominican Republic audiology clinic and training program set up by Donna. I am providing his accommodation and conference fees but we could use some help with his airfares and expenses.

Board members find it challenging carrying the burden of running EARS Inc. and juggling this with their other commitments. We are moving on in faith but we need prayer and encouragement and a deeper commitment from our members, so now is the time to step up. We give thanks to the Lord for the first 20 years of EARS Inc. but the challenges of the next 20 will be even greater and we look to the Lord for His direction and provision through His people. The rewards are extraordinary and we are happy to share them.

*David Pither - President, EARS Inc.*



EARS Incorporated is an Australian, not-for-profit association dedicated to reducing the incidence and impact of hearing impairment through training and equipping local individuals and agencies in developing countries.

We serve and empower people, irrespective of nationality, race, gender or religion, while showing the love of Jesus through our words and actions.

Our vision is for deaf and hearing impaired people in developing countries to have access to the hearing services they need to help them to reach their potential.

## GOODBYE & HELLO

After 20 years of faithful service, **Sheryl Pither** retired from her role as Treasurer at the EARS Inc. AGM in May. The board expressed their deep appreciation for Sheryl's years of dedication in managing the EARS finances. We know the sacrifices that she has made to serve EARS for so long.

EARS welcomes our new Treasurer **Nick Philpott**. Nick lives in Melbourne with his wife and two children. He's worked in the financial services industry for more than 20 years, currently as a Senior Investment Officer. "For many years I have known about the work that EARS has done, and am inspired to be involved with an organisation that provides such vital services to those in the world that are in the greatest need," he said. His interests include film, music and playing sports such as soccer and volleyball.

**At the EARS Inc. AGM on 26 May**, all board members but Sheryl stood for re-election to the board. The 2019-2020 committee is President - David Pither, Vice President - Peter Bartlett, Secretary - Marg Anderson, Treasurer - Nick Philpott, and Ordinary (though far from it!) members - Donna Carkeet, Wesley Ong and Judith Francis.



## May in Malawi



*Bec Bartlett with the staff and students of the Hearing Clinic and Training Centre at African Bible College, Lilongwe, Malawi.*

Rebecca Bartlett visited the team at the ABC Hearing Clinic and Training Centre (HCTC) for the last two weeks of May, primarily to interview new students for 2019 for the audiology degree program at African Bible College (ABC). Along with Fletcher Chisalipo (Head of the Audiology Department), Blessings Mvula and Tiwa Kachaje (audiology clinicians), Bec conducted two interview sessions and observed the students interacting with third-year students and staff on a clinical outreach afternoon. "We were so impressed with the calibre of the new students and the enthusiasm they demonstrated, that we now have nine more students in the tertiary-level training program," Bec reported. They will begin their degree in August when Dr Ian Grant from Australia visits to teach them Chemistry.

Bec was also able to meet with staff to discuss the progress of the services provided at the clinic, outreach work and maintenance, and to review finances and program plans for the next 12 months. Since the program started, newborn hearing screenings have increased from 20 in 2016, to 303 in 2017, and 459 in 2018. On outreach in remote locations across Central and Northern Malawi, it is now routine to fit hearing devices on the same day as testing. Hear The World Foundation has recently provided funds for a second hearing aid analyser so that we are able to fit devices in the clinic when the team is on outreach.

We are so pleased to welcome to the ABC clinic team Dr Jenna Vallario, a recently graduated audiologist from Florida, USA. Jenna also visited in May so that she could meet Bec and prepare for her move to Malawi in August for a two-year placement. Jenna's teaching role at ABC has enabled us to enrol this new batch of audiology students. Jenna will be supported by a number of visiting audiologists including Lois Grant (Australia) and Helen Brough (UK). Fletcher has been teaching the third-year students in science and basic audiology, and we are delighted with his development as a teacher and mentor. Bec was able to spend time with Jenna and Fletcher going over the program for the next two years and introducing Jenna to her new environment and role. Bec will visit again in August to support Jenna in her life-changing move.

The team of staff and students is growing. We are so impressed with how the Malawian staff have taken ownership of this EARS Inc. ministry.

We are always on the lookout for more volunteer audiologist who may be interested in supporting the teaching program and supervising the growing number of students on practical courses and outreaches, which are so vital for learning.

***If you would like more information about how you can help or be involved in the Malawi project, please contact us.***

## Out of my comfort zone in Malawi's emerald season\*

*By Rosie Leslie*

I can honestly say that going to Malawi to lecture five terrific Bachelor of Theology/Bachelor of Science (Audiology) students in January was God's idea not mine. This gave me confidence to wait for His help when I faced the many challenges involved in doing something very new for me - a Summer Intensive, requiring me to present several lectures over a four-week period, in a country far away. My confidence was also anchored in the truly helpful preparation and advice provided by Helen Brough, Lois Grant, and Peter and Rebecca Bartlett, all experienced lecturers for the HCTC Audiology course.

As a professional development exercise it was invaluable to me!! It was a unique and precious experience of cross cultural teaching and assessment.

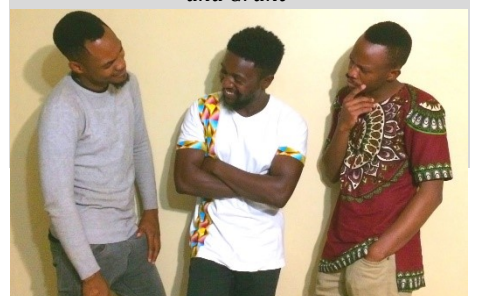
However to be an observer and teaching participant at the ABC HCTC clinic, and also work clinically in the last week at outreach events, was something that I will always treasure in my heart.

The combined partnership of EARS Inc., African Bible Colleges and Hear The World (Phonak's generous charitable arm), along with wonderfully dedicated and inspiring graduate clinicians, has changed the world of the hearing impaired in Malawi and in Africa forever - a cause for triumphant celebration!

\*Malawi has five seasons.



*Above: Rosie with students Nancy (left) and Memory. Below: Students Yesaya, Khumbo and Grant*



## CGHH CONFERENCE 2019

EARS Inc. will again be represented at the 2019 Conference of the Coalition for Global Hearing Health at Arizona State University in October. Donna will present four papers: ‘Whose project is it? Working in partnership between organisations’, ‘The development of early detection and intervention using a multidisciplinary team approach in Fiji’, ‘Early intervention playgroups in Frank Hilton Organisation, Fiji’ and ‘Identification and rehabilitation of students with hearing impairment in Special Education schools in Fiji’. David will run his one-day earmould making workshop and will be interviewed before participants about his involvement with EARS and learnings.



At the 2018 World Congress of Audiology in Cape Town, our Vice-President Peter presented our STORE framework for introducing and implementing hearing programs in the developing world.

## TRAINING IN PNG

By Desmond Taboeya, Callan Services, Papua New Guinea

The purpose of the five-day hearing equipment calibration and maintenance training was to upskill the regional clinicians in the Network of Callan Services and CSNU CBR trainers. The course was run in May in Port Moresby.

It had been quite a long time since the last calibration training, and calibration of Callan’s hearing equipment was well overdue. EARS Inc.’s Donna Carkeet (Sydney-based Audiologist who is also actively involved in the training of staff and on the hearing project across the Pacific) and Paul Flynn (Technician) facilitated the hearing equipment calibration and maintenance practical training. It was a wonderful learning experience for the seven clinical staff who participated.

“Thank you EARS Inc. and David and Donna for making it happen,” said Paul. “They were a great crew, all very good learners and listeners - it was a fun and interesting time. I learnt a lot about PNG, and now I have lots of new friends I will miss very much until next time.”

The Network of Callan Services will continue their partnership with EARS to improve the delivery of quality hearing services to our clients.



Paul Flynn (right with friend Lauren) thoroughly enjoyed his time in PNG training the seven willing students.

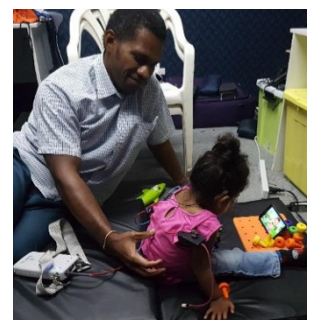


If you would like an EARS Inc. donation box or can help us distribute them to waiting rooms of hearing and medical clinics, please contact us.

## NEW MEMBER for FIJI PROJECT

Josefa Baleinukulala worked at Fiji’s Frank Hilton Organisation’s (FHO) ‘Project Heaven’ as a hearing screener. Donna said, “When we interviewed audiology assistant candidates, he impressed us as intelligent, humble and keen to help kids in Fiji hear.”

Josefa sent us the following note: *I am fortunate to have joined a determined Audiology team that had been teaching me a lot of new things. I had experience in otoscopy (looking in ears) and some knowledge about Audiometry. This has been enhanced since I joined Frank Hilton Organisation as we have hearing impaired patients coming in and Dr Donna and Tukana to learn from. I am blessed to have an Audiologist and the only qualified Audiometric officer in Fiji teaching me and I am looking forward to many great achievements in the future. I would also like to thank Shabina our Audiology coordinator for making me feel welcome. I am sure this will be a fruitful year and may we all continue to build up our Audiology Department as we rely on God's grace and directions to move us forward.*



## FIJI PROJECT UPDATE

EARS' collaboration with local partner Frank Hilton Organisation (FHO) continues to work well in Fiji, with many exciting developments and achievements in the past 18 months.

Donna visited Fiji five times (14 weeks) in 2018, working on development and training in the audiology department as well as assisting in the outreach programs. As well as her focus on audiology, she spends a lot of time with the kids who stay at the hostel. She sees this as a part of her ministry. Screening in Fiji's special schools continues. Several children with hearing loss were fitted with hearing aids, and Donna has trained staff in the schools to manage these devices. A Fiji government grant pays for hearing aids fitted to children in special schools. The grant now has been extended to cover all children under 18 years. EARS has also donated equipment and hearing aids for use in the audiology program.

Five volunteers were involved in the project last year, including Nick Kourtis and David Pither who spent a week in March 2018 running training

in earmoulds and calibration of equipment, and Australian audiologist Mahes Satchi who spent two weeks in April assisting with the process of file revision and establishing a recall system, as well as assisting with FM fittings for the children at school.

Lauren Churchill was recently in Fiji as an EARS Inc. volunteer, working on social development, and diversional therapy and behavioural control with the high-support kids.

FHO team has now developed three playgroups a week for parents and preschool children and infants with disabilities to attend. This is the only Early Intervention Centre program in Fiji. The audiology team attends to assess the children's hearing and work with them on their communication skills.

"The Fiji audiology team works as part of a multidisciplinary team including speech pathology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and early education," said Donna. "We also have family support officers and community outreach officers. This team is still developing but we are excited by the outcomes we've seen so



far, with some of the children and their families showing real improvements in quality of life and access to education and support. I am so proud of the team and all the work that they are doing, and delighted that EARS Inc. can assist in this team.

One of Donna's goals this year is a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and FHO to provide pediatric audiology services, and to train nurses in audiometry. The MoH wants seven nurses trained, and she has already begun developing a one-year nurse audiometry curriculum program.

### Donna's mate

"One of the kids I have the pleasure of being friends with at the Frank Hilton Organisation special school in Fiji is a 17-year-old lad with cerebral palsy. Thanks to the speech pathology team at Frank Hilton Organisation, he has learnt to communicate by looking at symbols on cards. His eyes are quick and sometimes you miss what he says.

At the end of last year, I and others in the multidisciplinary team talked to the special school about accepting him into their program. After a trial he now attends school four days a week. From occasional trips out of the hostel to going out almost every day and hanging out with other people, the change in his life is immense." - Donna



### HILTON AUDIOLOGY AND SPEECH THERAPY DEPARTMENT

*Excerpt from Frank Hilton Organisation's 2018 Annual Report*

The Department experienced a tremendous surge in growth during 2017, and now offers a wide range of services in keeping with the FHO goal of providing early detection and intervention at the earliest possible time in the life of a child. FHO remains the only facility in Fiji providing a comprehensive range of services in this field, most of which are not otherwise available even as stand-alone Unit to children in Fiji. Staff includes Dr Donna Carkeet, Consultant Audiologist from Australia and Sevanaia Ratumaitavuki, Audiometrist.

A very generous donation of equipment and material from Carbez Alliance and further supplemented through purchases made by FHO, saw the commencement of the Ear Mould Lab, the only unit of its kind in Fiji. Manned by a technician trained by David Pither from our partner organisation Ears Inc., it produces both soft and hard moulds. A hearing aid is only as good as the fit of the Ear Mould and therefore the impressions of the child's ear are taken and the mould is individually designed for each child. As children grow, the child's ear moulds are changed every 3-4 months to ensure an accurate fit.

## DOMINICAN REPUBLIC REVISITED

*Donna Carkeet lived in the Dominican Republic (DR) from 2005 to 2013. Through her resourcefulness, faith and fund raising, she established a hearing clinic, wrote a two-year Audiometric Technicians course and a four-year Audiometry Bachelors Degree, and established DR's first earmould laboratory. She returned to Australia in 2013, but continues to keep in touch with her former students and provide long-distance support.*

*Donna and her son Madison revisited Dominican Republic last Christmas. The pizzeria she first occupied is now a fully functioning clinic with two large audio booths, an adult booth, two fitting rooms, an ENT consultation room, speech therapy room and earmould laboratory.*

*The training and audiology service programs she initiated and developed are thriving. Four DR ex-students have set up their own clinics. They still contact Donna for advice.*

While in the Dominican at the end of last year, I had a chance to visit the clinic and spend time with the audiology graduates - they are all doing amazing things. I also saw the newly renovated clinic and meet the current students.

The new students are being trained by Miguel who has risen to the challenge of leading the audiology program in the hospital, with the support of the hospital director Nicole Hunter. Miguel was one of the first three students in the program, commencing his training with us in 2004. Because the audiology course was not fully accredited when he completed his training, he needed to complete a degree in nursing to be eligible to teach. He is also currently finishing a Masters in Speech Pathology so he can expand this area of the training program. Miguel is truly a servant of God in this project. He could earn more and have less stress working in other places, but he is called to serve and continues to amaze me. God gave us the right person to take over the project from me and take it further.



*The new DR audiology students are an exciting group, all with different strengths and hopes for their careers.*

The other graduates are doing well - some work in the hospital or its clinics and others in other clinics. Some have started their own businesses in different parts of the country. All of them were keen to meet and to talk about audiology. I spent several great nights 'geeking out' over audiology!

It is exciting to see just how independent this project is now. Hear The World is supporting the DR audiology educational program with trainers, lecturers and supervisors, and their support means they have now started testing newborn babies in some hospitals.

## CALLED TO SERVICE: FLASHBACK TO 2001

*By Donna Carkeet*

2001 was my first field trip overseas with EARS Inc., and I was hooked. I had finally figured out how I could use my profession to serve God.

Why am I sharing this now?

Because it was during this trip that I caught a vision for what God can do through EARS Inc. volunteers. In a relatively short time, we were able to teach local people to conduct hearing

tests, make earmoulds and fit hearing aids; to reach communities that did not have access to these services; and to train pastors to show Christ's love and serve their communities in a new way.

I decided during that trip that I wanted to do more, and in 2002 I used my long service leave to explore what God might have for me to do. That year I went to the Dominican Republic and God opened a whole new chapter in my life.

Not only hearing specialists are needed. Sometimes people say, "I don't know how I could help EARS Inc. in their work." We have had 'unskilled' volunteers who have made sure we ate, photocopies got done and people waited their turn, who taught staff how to create data sheets on Excel, who we trained so they could train others. We also have volunteers who cannot travel but are on the prayer team, run a fundraising event, serve on the board, collect donated hearing aids and equipment, help with administration and accounting, and review project plans and reports.

We always have a need for volunteers. Right now we need people who can help us with our updating or revamping our website, project writing, fundraising, grant submissions, and various administrative tasks. We also need various allied health professionals for projects as well as early intervention teachers and others.

**Interested? Let us know!**  
[admin@earsinc.org](mailto:admin@earsinc.org)



*The 2001 Indian mission EARS team in Kakinada - from left: Rebecca Bartlett (trusty team leader), Donna Carkeet, Terry, Judith and David Francis. David made earmoulds, Terry ran errands and organised paperwork, and the rest of us were audiologists.*

## Help us help people hear

If you would like to help, here's some ideas...

- **Donate audiological equipment and hearing aids.** We refurbish second hand aids and equipment.
- **Donate money.** Tax-deductible donations can be made through the GiveNow link on our website's Donate page. Maybe consider a bequest to EARS.
- **Run a trivia quiz.** We have an EARS Trivia Quiz Kit.
- **Join our fundraising team.**
- **Become a member of EARS.** See our website for membership forms.
- **Volunteer.** We need hearing professionals to provide training and hearing services overseas, technicians to check and calibrate equipment, and ordinary people to do a range of other tasks.
- **Join our prayer support team.** Contact our coordinator Jan Bebbington: [janbebbington@bigpond.com](mailto:janbebbington@bigpond.com).



## CONTACT US...

E: [admin@earsinc.org](mailto:admin@earsinc.org)

W: [www.earsinc.org](http://www.earsinc.org)

T: David Pither, President, +61 (0) 410 748 412

A: 447 Mont Albert Road, Box Hill, Victoria,  
3128 Australia



*EARS Inc.'s 20th birthday was celebrated with a dinner on 11 May. It was a wonderful evening with around 60 friends of EARS, looking back with thanks and looking forward to what the Lord has in store for our ministry.*



## Volunteers needed

If you are interested in volunteering overseas, let's make a plan! If you would like to be involved but are not able to travel at the moment, please still get in contact with us. We'll let you know about opportunities that arise in the future. Please note that overseas volunteers must fund their own travel. We will assist as much as we can with accommodation and other expenses.



### Fiji

- Trainers for audiometry
- Clinical supervisors
- Speech Pathologists, teachers of the deaf and other allied health professionals.

### Papua New Guinea

- Trainers for audiometry
- Supervision for Audiometry Diploma students

### Malawi, Africa

- Audiologists and audiometrists for short term and long term clinical work and clinical supervision
- Teachers for audiology units in BSc Audiology course
- Speech Pathologists and teachers of the deaf

### Australia

- Coordinator of donated equipment and hearing aids
- Website manager
- Assistance with administration tasks
- Online support for audiology/audiometry students
- Opportunities for observation and supervision in Australian clinics for PNG audiometry students
- Fundraisers

All enquiries to Judith Francis, EARS Inc. Volunteer  
Co-ordinator [judy@earsinc.org](mailto:judy@earsinc.org).



Keep in touch with latest EARS happenings by becoming a 'friend' on the EARS Inc. Facebook page.