

# ALL EARS



**EARS inc.**

Suite 302, 220 Collins Street  
Melbourne 3000, Australia  
Ph: (03) 9654 5511  
Fax: (03) 9650 4862

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## *For those reading for the first time.....*

***EARS Inc. is an Australian based interdenominational Christian organisation comprising audiologists, audiometrists and allied health professionals. EARS Inc. is dedicated to serving, and addressing the needs of those affected by hearing impairment and deafness, who live in the developing world, irrespective of nationality, race, gender or religion.***

***The work of EARS Inc. aims to provide ongoing training and support to local workers or 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. The aim is to help people help themselves and others.***



*Donna Carkeet with some local children in the Dominican Republic.*

## **Note from the Editor.....**

Greetings to you all. It has been over a year since we have put together our last newsletter, something for which I do apologise. I became a little distracted and side-tracked when my husband & I decided to move our family to Scotland. EARS Inc. now has a truly internationally-based Board, although in our hearts we remain True Blue. Eighteen months is a lot of time to catch up on and Donna has made fantastic progress in setting up the school of audiology in the Dominican Republic. On May 15 the first group of students started attending classes with Donna. Praise God! In this newsletter there is a summary of the work EARS has done in Africa & the Dominican Republic. There is a summary of Donna's highlights from this year so far and some suggestions on how you may be able to assist us in fundraising. We all thank you for your interest and support of EARS Inc. Please contact me via email at [j.r.francis@bigpond.com](mailto:j.r.francis@bigpond.com) with any enquiries or suggestions.

Blessings, Judith Francis.

P.S. It would help us save significant funds in postage if we could email out the newsletter so if you are happy to receive the newsletter via email please let me know.

## **EARS in Africa.....**

David Pither, our President, has been visiting Africa every year since 2002 and on his yearly trips David usually visits Botswana as well as other African countries in order to provide training, mostly in setting up ear mould laboratories. The ear mould labs established in these countries are reportedly still operating; however current statistics are not available.

### Botswana

David is currently the Chairman of the Board of the Godisa Technologies Trust in Botswana. Production of the Godisa Trust's line of solar-powered hearing aids & chargers has ceased due to the suppliers going out of business and a new line is currently being developed.

### Ethiopia

In 2003 David trained people from three deaf schools to make ear moulds in Ethiopia, including one sponsored by CBMI. The best of these trainees unfortunately later died, we believe, of AIDS. Terry Ryan from Wodonga visited Ethiopia in late 2005 to provide an audiometry and ear mould refresher course. This has led to CBMI providing hearing aids from Germany now that, with good ear moulds, they can be fitted properly.

### Namibia

In 2004 people from Namibia and Zimbabwe came to Botswana for training. This allowed David to also visit Zambia briefly on the invitation of a group within the United Church of Australia. Through networking this subsequently saw an English aid agency step in to provide support for a local Association for the Deaf. Prior to this the corruption within the Association was such that little could be done to help.

### Swaziland

When David visited the only deaf school in Swaziland in 2006 they were able to apply for a grant from the Australian High Commission in South Africa with his guidance & assistance. The school was given USD \$25,000 to purchase hearing aids, including 60 solar-powered body-worn hearing aids designed by EARS along with a large number of behind-the-ear (BTE) hearing aids. A South African audiometrist was able to provide oversight of their fitting.

### Zimbabwe

David's recent trip in 2007 to Zimbabwe saw the loan of an ear mould lab to a school there and training for two hearing impediment teachers, a nurse, a district schools hearing impediment inspector and the headmaster. A local engineer was trained for back-up and oversight. Fifteen body-worn hearing aids were supplied and children from outside the school with hearing loss were to be directed to the

school for hearing aid fitting. We were unable to donate the lab to the school as donations must be recorded for the Government which would mean confiscation at a later date, hence the equipment is on loan. The local people who invited me to Zimbabwe look to be illegally dispossessed of their land at any time and so although I hope to return in March 2008 this may not be possible.



*A young boy from Zimbabwe who was the first recipient of a custom ear mould made by his teacher, in the white hat. We had trouble finding a place on his shirt to hang the body-worn hearing aid as the pockets are all ripped. He is standing beside his mother. This was taken in March 2007.*

### Did you know?.....

- The EARS Inc website at [www.earsinc.org](http://www.earsinc.org) is undergoing a makeover so keep an eye on it in the near future.
- EARS is keen to receive second hand hearing aids (behind-the-ear and body-worn aids) which are still in good working order, so that they can be refitted overseas. We also take hearing aids that appear dead but have useful parts (so as long as the dog nibbled it and didn't eat it we'll take it), including in-the-ear hearing aids.
- Donations of second hand equipment (audiometers, tympanometers, insertion gain machines, ultrasonic cleaners, otoscopes etc.) in good working order are also most highly valued and appreciated.

## **EARS in the DR.....**

David Pither has been visiting the Dominican Republic in Central America since 2001 at the request of Medical Ministries International. He began a pilot audiometry training program in one room of the hospital and helped establish a hearing clinic. Donna Carkeet began visiting in 2002 to provide training and assistance and finally moved to there in September 2005.

David & Donna have carried over a considerable amount of donated equipment and hearing aids to the DR. Donna has done an amazing job of transforming the little earmould lab initially set up by David with only 100 body aids into a high quality clinic and now school of audiology. This includes a UV shell making lab to assemble custom-made in-the-ear (ITE) hearing aids, Otoacoustic Emissions (DPOAE) equipment for testing newborns and Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) equipment.

The demand for services in the Dominican Republic is huge, with sixty percent of the population living below the poverty line. Economic conditions are currently deteriorating rapidly there. We estimate that the audiometry clinic could see up to 900 outpatients every week if we could staff and resource it. It is unlikely that we will see this happen in the next ten years unless major donors can be found. The number of people, especially children, who need these services and who do not receive it will be greater each year at current rates of population growth. On top of that, this year we expect a significant increase in the number of babies born with hearing defects due to Rubella. We would like to be able to take students from Haiti and other Central American countries but our main focus is to provide enough staff for our own clinic needs.

## **Donna's highlights of 2007 so far.....**

### **January**

- I arrived back from my break in Australia in time to begin a four day project in which 1000 children received

hearing aids.

- This was followed by a visit from two Rotarians who had 250 hearing aids to fit. With very short notice we managed to find suitable children.
- It was at this time that we received two visitors from New Zealand, one an audiologist and the other a computer trainer, and they came at just the right time. Patsy was able to manage the lists in Excel and Mike helped with school visits and testing.



*Mike, visiting the DR from New Zealand, doing play audiometry with a child.*

### **February**

- Joanne from Partners for a Greater Voice came to visit and we were able to attend a talk and school visit with her. Mike & I assisted them in setting up FM systems for the children in a local deaf school.
- Joel attended his first overseas conference where he presented about the situation in the DR with a local Ear Nose & Throat Specialist He really enjoyed travelling and learnt a lot from the experience.
- We started our clinic project, thanks to two audiologists that came through Rotary, by providing hearing aids to 120 children who otherwise could not have afforded it. We now have a good relationship with the local Rotary club and I have since done two presentations for them.
- In Santiago we tested 150 people and fitted 100 hearing aids in two days. Long, long days!



**March**

- I worked really hard on the university materials and it was a challenge getting them edited. Our normal clinic work was disrupted by all the projects and I was feeling further and further behind.
- We started planning & developing our business ideas for Americo Lugo, a clinic in the city to serve the people who have means to pay which would then help to subsidise the hospital clinic.



*Taking an ear impression in the DR.*

**April**

- Two teachers visited to set up physical rehabilitation groups in the integrated health department. I worked with them on this for the two week visit in order to help develop the skills of the rehabilitation team who see many of our patients.
- I went to the American Academy of Audiology conference in Denver, thanks to a donation. This event is huge and lets me meet with all the Latin American representatives for the hearing aid companies as well as professors from the universities that teach in Spanish. We made contact with a doctor from Canada who has since donated three audiometers and two tympanometers. He is currently searching for other equipment for us as well and plans to visit in the next year. This time was invaluable.
- With short notice we did preliminary help testing and gathered 170 people

for a visiting project team. It was a team effort as Joel and Miguel did the assessments, I arrived back to help them on the day of the project cleaning ears and Danny was able to provide instruction for the patients and make follow-up appointments. These projects are run by visiting audiology teams (not always all audiologists) who fit the hearing aids to the people as best they can given the situation and time limits. We have tried to change our preliminary testing to be more accurate and to provide follow-up appointments to ease the parents' confusion & to optimise the fittings.

**May**

- I started to work really hard on the university course and I did some school visits and training. Miguel and Joel were busy in the clinic. Without projects we fit around 45-50 people a month with hearing aids.
- May 15 was a historic day as our first class of students began lessons with me here one day a week. We have five students, three young men and two women, and we are excited that they have started observing in clinic. They are very keen and bring a new energy into the place.
- Joel and Miguel stay late after work two days a week to study their two new units for this term. I also teach an English class another two afternoons a week for some hospital staff.

**June**

- CBMI visited and the meeting with them went well. I have now rewritten a proposal for submission with them to try to get funding for the building and our project here.
- We have a new secretary, Niurka, who has more specific training in editing documents and computer skills and has already become indispensable. I feel so much more relaxed as my documents can be corrected quickly and without fuss by one person in conjunction with myself, compared to the huge drama previously. I produce a lot of presentations each week in my Spanish which needs grammatical correction, and now a presentation is

corrected in an hour and the 60 page student manuals take about a week.

- A special education teacher visited from the United States who was teaching about autism so we were involved in giving talks at the deaf schools about differential diagnosis between autism and deafness.

### Looking ahead

- In August the students have exams and final assignments.
- Miguel, who works in our clinic, is getting married to Julie his long time fiancée. We are really happy for him.
- I am finalising all the student course manuals for next term and organising the schedule.
- We are praying over our application for funds from another mission organisation for the renovation of the building.
- At the end of August I go on holiday.
- In September it is back into the new term with our students taking four subjects instead of one, increasing my workload a lot.
- We also start afternoon English class programs in the hospital and hope to assist in commencing the physical rehabilitation groups.
- Judith and David Francis come to visit towards the end of September and then David Pither will come in October. They will all help share my teaching load and help out in the clinic in a variety of ways.
- We also hope to start our new clinic in the city in the next few months to assist in raising the income levels of our staff.



*A young Dominican boy during his hearing test.*

## Fundraising.....how can you help?

Fundraising is EARS Inc.'s biggest challenge. Ultimately we need a volunteer to co-ordinate & promote fundraising activities, however, in the mean time we can start on a smaller scale. It would be fantastic if some of our supporters could aim to organise just one fundraising event in their local area in order to raise awareness of EARS Inc. in their community or church and to raise money towards one of the following targets:

1. \$3500 for sponsorship of an audiology student in the Dominican Republic to pay their university course fees for two years.
2. \$2500 to cover the cost of Donna's annual airfare home to visit family & friends.
3. \$200 to cover the cost of a hearing aid to be fitted to a hearing-impaired person who couldn't otherwise have afforded it.

Thank you to all of you who already regularly support EARS Inc financially. Remember, any donations to the EARS Inc. Overseas Aid Fund towards the work Donna does in the Dominican Republic are tax deductible.

## Volunteers Wanted...

### • Administration/ Promotion

We are still blessed to have Jim Bambery assisting us. We also need assistance with promotion, fundraising, and other tasks such as record keeping and consolidating our membership details.

### • Hearing Aid Technicians

We require technicians willing to travel and teach in many of our current projects. So if you are planning a holiday abroad, why not volunteer a week or two in another country? It is a great way to get to know another culture.

### • Audiologists/Audiometrists

As usual there are dozens of locations requiring an Audiologist/Audiometrist 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.

To register interest as a volunteer please phone the EARS Inc. office on +61 3 9654 5511 or contact Judith Francis at [j.r.francis@bigpond.com](mailto:j.r.francis@bigpond.com).

## **EARS Inc – Membership**

### **MY DETAILS:**

Title: \_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Ph: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

- I would like to receive regular newsletters.
- I would like to be a prayer supporter.
- I would like to be a financial supporter of EARS Inc.
- I would like to support Donna Carkeet in the DR on a monthly basis.

### **I PREFER TO GIVE BY:**

cheque / money order  
*(please make payable to EARS Inc. or Ears Inc. Overseas Aid fund for tax deductible donations)*

I will arrange for direct debit with my bank. Please provide me with the EARS Inc. account details.

Please debit my credit card:  
*(Note: this is not for tax deductible donations, please contact EARS Inc. if you would like to make a tax deductible donation)*

Bankcard / MasterCard / Visa

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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_