

ALL EARS



EARS inc.

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Donna Carkeet in the Dominican Republic:



Centre: Donna and the students.

Clockwise from top left: Donna's house; Clinic staff dinner when David, Judith & Atira Francis visited; Students taking ear impressions; Donna with local children; The road to work; The Caribbean Sea; Donna visiting the local barrio (neighbourhood); The new city clinic.

EARS in the DR.....

Australian audiologist Donna Carkeet is living in the Dominican Republic to work on a joint project between EARS Inc. and MMI (Medical Ministries International). Donna oversees the audiology clinic set up by EARS at the Dr Elias Santana Hospital in Los Alcorrizos, a poor neighbourhood in the outskirts of the DR capital Santo Domingo. Donna also lectures and supervises the students who are enrolled in the audiometry university course that she developed.

Since the previous issue of the newsletter was published, the second clinic based in the city area of Santo Domingo has been opened and the staff are busy promoting this new service. The funds raised from this clinic, which typically services a wealthier client base, help supplement the work done at the hospital clinic. Donna has also begun interviewing the next intake of students.

In this issue we have a contribution from one of the audiometry students Sevanaia Ratumaitavuki, affectionately known as Tuks, who unexpectedly is Fijian. Please feel free to contact him via email if you have any questions or wish to provide encouragement.



"I am Sevanaia Ratumaitavuki from Fiji and I am here in the DR to accompany my wife who came under the MMI to do her specialty in

Ophthalmology. I was lucky that I was given this opportunity to study audiology in the same hospital where my wife is studying. If everything goes as planned I might complete my first 2 year course in April next year and I can be an audiometrist. I would then like to continue to finish as an audiologist in the 2 years after that if God allows me to. The audiology program is run in the hospital by Ms Donna Carkeet, an Australian audiologist who is running the audiology clinic here as well. I count myself lucky to study under a very experienced audiologist like Donna who has served in several countries as a missionary audiologist.

The classes are in Spanish and being a non-Spanish speaker makes this very challenging for me. I studied Spanish until level 2 and that has carried me through with the practice to this 3rd semester of study. The reality is that in every class we take, I only understand 70 % of the Spanish. I am, however, so lucky that I have some English textbooks, that Ms Carkeet is an English speaker, and that both the audiometrists in the clinic know English. This makes the course very interesting and very challenging to me, and I never regret taking it up in the first place.

There is no audiologist in my home country Fiji. If I complete this course successfully I'm thinking of working with the Fiji Deaf Association, which is the main body of the Fiji government that looks after the deaf people of Fiji. If I am unable to do this I will try set up a private clinic to serve the hearing need in my country.

I'm so blessed that I have been helped financially by an Australian couple who have paid half of my study fees. I also thank the Lord that I have been surrounded by my caring neighbours and friends who share the very challenging life we are going through here.

May God bless this program and all who read this article."

S.Ratumaitavuki (skut05@yahoo.com)

EARS in Africa.....

David Pither, our President, paid his annual visit to Africa with a two week trip in March taking in Malawi and Botswana, with an unscheduled stopover in Zimbabwe.



Victor (centre) and Morgan (right) learning to make earmoulds at SOS village in Malawi in March 2008.

He spent five days in Malawi where he ran a three day intensive earmould manufacturing workshop in the SOS community at Lilongwe. He personally donated the equipment to set up two earmould labs, one in Lilongwe and the other in Blantyre, and two young men, Morgan and Victor, attended the training. Victor reports from Blantyre three weeks later: "It was good to have you here in Malawi doing the ear mould training, I had a perfect fitting yesterday and I thought I should share this with you." Previously he had to send ear impressions out of the country and it took up to six months to receive the finished earmoulds, which then did not fit properly anyway. Now he can take an impression and fit a custom hard acrylic earmould within two hours.



Victor with his own earmould (Malawi).

The remaining time in Africa was spent in Botswana at the Godisa Technologies Trust AGM of which David is Chairman. Godisa has just released a more technically advanced Solar Hearing Aid battery charger. Godisa is looking for a "volunteer" audiologist for a two year posting. Funding is available for a stipend to cover travel, accomodation and most expenses. If interested contact David at audicare@mira.net.

Did you know?.....

- 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.

For those reading for the first time...

EARS Inc. is an Australian based interdenominational Christian organisation comprising audiologists, audiometrists, allied health professionals and other interested members. 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.

EARS in PNG.....



Map of Papua New Guinea, including Lae.
From ABC website – 4 Corners program.

The Hearing and Speech Clinic located at the Morobe Special Education Resource Centre (MSERC) is continuing to provide a much needed service in Lae, Papua New Guinea’s biggest town after the capital Port Moresby. Hearing clinic worker Erick Honenu, trained by Peter and Rebecca Bartlett in 2005 and supported by a trip from Lois Grant in 2007, confidently performs otoscopy and tympanometry and conducts hearing assessments for children and adults at the clinic. Erick is also able to remove wax from ear canals, advise on hearing aid suitability, take ear impressions for ear moulds which are made on site by mould-maker Foreting Yang, and fit and evaluate hearing aids.

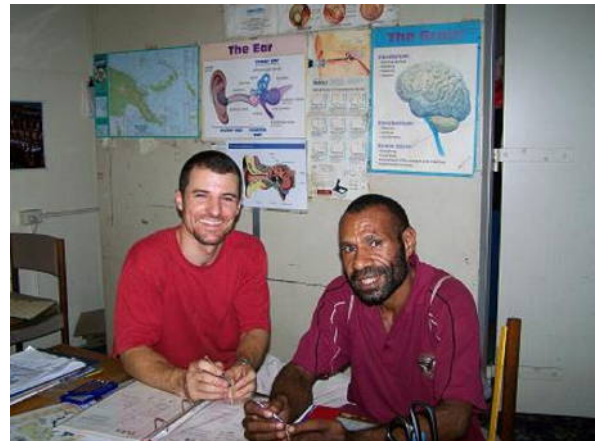


Erick outside the Hearing and Speech Clinic at the Morobe Special Education Resource Centre (M.S.E.R.C.), Lae.

In February this year, Peter Bartlett returned to the Hearing and Speech Clinic to:

- further Erick’s training and encourage him in continuing his faithful service;

- provide much needed resources, including second-hand hearing aids and equipment, and new donated Zeni-Power hearing aid batteries;
- evaluate the financial security of the clinic; and
- make further recommendations to the MSERC Board.



Peter and Erick in the Hearing and Speech Clinic in Lae doing hearing aid training.

Given the Hearing and Speech Clinic was closed down in 2004 due to financial mismanagement, it was most pleasing to discover that, aside from a few questionable financial decisions, the clinic had been well managed in the last three years and was still adequately funded to provide ongoing services well into the future. The clinic aims to be financially self-sustaining and therefore charges small fees for the hearing services. This demonstrates to the community that the services are valuable, without becoming a burden to recipients.



Performing Insertion Gain measurements to fit a hearing aid.

A key component of the clinic revenue is derived from industries requiring Occupational Health and Safety hearing assessments for their employees. Performing these industrial hearing assessments allows Erick to be funded for other non-financed work he performs such as school and rural outreach visits.



Testing equipment in the booth.

It was particularly encouraging to again witness the depth of support received from local voluntary groups such as Rotary clubs, industrial companies such as NCI Packaging and Orica, and other individuals. It is obvious many realise the value of sustaining this important clinic. A good example observed recently was the move to get the facilities air-conditioned, given the hot humid conditions were making testing unbearable and the equipment was deteriorating. A local business gave a very reasonable quote, and then Ian Priestly, through the Huon Gulf Rotary Club, organised to pick up the cost. This allowed clinic funds to be directed towards maintaining the clinic's hearing services.

Although only in Lae for about nine days, much was achieved during Peter's short visit. There is however far more that needs to be done, including expanding the personnel and promotion of the clinic. This will be the focus of future visits.

If you would like more information about the Hearing and Speech Clinic in Lae, or you would like to in some way support the clinic, please contact Peter at pandrbartlett@yahoo.com.

AGM

The EARS Inc. Annual General Meeting was held on Sunday 13 April 2008.

Three of our board members retired this year, Rebecca Bartlett, Jairo Aviles and Mark Fry. We thank them for their support of and commitment to EARS. We especially thank Rebecca for serving many years in the role of Secretary. The Board members elected for 2008/2009 are:

President	David Pither
Vice-President	Peter Bartlett
Treasurer	Sheryl Pither
Secretary	Judith Francis
Ordinary Members	Donna Carkeet Rosemary Leslie

The meeting mainly involved discussion of the financial report and an update on our current projects. If you would like a copy of the AGM minutes please get in contact with us.

We have decided to review our constitution and look at what changes are required to suit the current operations of EARS Inc. We will review the number of allowable board members and create a position on the board for a full-time field worker representative, as well as to review and simplify the statement of faith. A Constitution Review Committee has been formed and if you have any questions or ideas please contact Judith Francis at j.r.francis@bigpond.com or Rosemary Leslie at rosieleslie11@hotmail.com.

**The EARS Inc
website is
www.earsinc.org**

Volunteers Needed...

❖ Web Designer

Our new website has hit a snag and we need a web designer willing to invest a little time into finishing it so that it is suitable to go online.

❖ Marketing Director/Co-ordinator

Having someone in this role is essential for EARS to continue growing and taking on more projects. We need someone able to create a marketing strategy appropriate for EARS fundraising and to co-ordinate volunteers involved in fundraising activities.

❖ Audiologists/Audiometrists

Audiologists/audiometrists are needed in the Dominican Republic for ABR training, help in general clinic organisation, supervision of students, school screening projects, and beginning of community outreach programs.

There are also many other 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.

❖ 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.

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.

Those who have ears to hear, let them hear.

EARS Inc. Membership

MY DETAILS:

Title: _____ Name: _____

Address: _____

State: _____ Postcode: _____

Ph: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

- I would like to receive regular newsletters via email / post (circle preferred option).
- 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:

□□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□

Expiry Date on the card: ____/____

Signature: _____

This payment / authorisation is for:

- A single gift of \$ _____
- A monthly payment of \$ _____

Please remove this section and post to:
EARS Inc.
Suite 302, 220 Collins Street
Melbourne 3000
Australia

Thank you for your support.