

Deafness Awareness Week 2000

MEDIA RELEASE

Oticon Foundation of New Zealand

20 – 26 November 2000

Hearing Joy Restored at Rest Home

The joy of hearing has been restored at the Chalmers Presbyterian Support Rest Home in New Plymouth, thanks to the use of personal FM receivers.

“We thought we would share our success story with others during Deaf Awareness Week,” says Pat Cayzer, Recreation Therapist at the Home, “because for a long time people were telling us there wasn’t anything that would help.”

Mrs Cayzer says that with many elderly residents who are users of hearing aids, isolation within a group was still occurring. “This is because several voices all speaking at once is a babble, and hearing aid users often can’t pick out the different sounds,” she says. Some residents were not joining in, which was having a negative impact on the person’s self-esteem.

“It’s a common problem in rest homes and we were desperate to add to people’s dignity and quality lifestyle,” she says.

After taking advice from Kathy Ellison, Hearing Therapist at the local Hearing Association, Pat discovered that the Phonic Ear personal FM system would be ideal. “There’s no installation costs, the person speaking clips on the transmitter and positions the microphone, whilst the listener wears a receiver with either: a loop around their neck - which sends the sound directly to their hearing aid; or - if they don’t have a hearing aid – with a simple headset. It couldn’t be more simple,” she says.

A test run by the residents showed such enthusiasm, “it was just too good to let

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go”, that four headsets, receivers and a transmitter were purchased. “One gentleman described it as ‘just like being born again’, and on another occasion, we were thrilled to celebrate a 100th birthday with all the tributes able to be clearly heard and appreciated,” she says.

“Then we realised that our hospital patients could benefit too, so we did some fundraising and purchased a further transmitter and two more receivers for the patients,” says Mrs Cayzer. “Simply reading a novel or a newspaper out loud adds so much pleasure into someone’s day. Visits from doctors, lawyers and others are also improved because now all the message can be heard.”

Mrs Cayzer urges others who provide services to hearing-impaired people, to find out about and consider the use of assistive listening systems like the Phonic Ear.

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