

soundscape

FEBRUARY 2001

NEWSLETTER OF THE OTICON FOUNDATION IN NEW ZEALAND

THE OTICON
FOUNDATION IN
NEW ZEALAND WAS
ESTABLISHED IN
OCTOBER 1976.

INCOME GENERATED
FROM THE SALE OF
OTICON PRODUCTS IS
DISTRIBUTED THROUGH
THE FOUNDATION TO
GROUPS AND
ORGANISATIONS
SEEKING FINANCIAL
SUPPORT FOR
PROJECTS THAT
BENEFIT THE HEARING
IMPAIRED.

In this edition of *Soundscape*, the benefits of early detection and intervention for children with hearing loss are apparent.

Dr Picton's research shows the benefits of nationwide newborn hearing screening programmes. Early detection and intervention would make a significant difference to people's lives by reducing some of the negative consequences of delayed diagnosis and treatment.

If you have a new project that would contribute to improving knowledge or understanding about hearing impairment, or benefit people's lives in a positive way either through direct support or reducing barriers, we'd like to hear from you. The closing date for applications is 31 March. A list of last year's recipients is printed on page four along with the criteria for granting funds. We look forward to receiving your application.

Karen Pullar, Secretary to the Trustees



Deaf Millennium Games

The Millennium Games for the Deaf were held in Palmerston North over Labour Weekend (October 19-23) with over 220 athletes competing. The Games celebrated 50 years of New Zealand Deaf Sports competition, both nationally and internationally. They are organised by Deaf people for Deaf people and hosted by the local Deaf Society.

The Games offer a unique opportunity for New Zealand's Deaf community to be together in a positive celebration of Deaf culture and Deaf sport. Over 90 percent of Deaf children come from hearing families. The Games are one of the few opportunities for the hearing to better understand Deaf culture and way of life, while also providing a positive experience for Deaf youth. As a sporting event it provides an opportunity for selection to attend overseas Deaf tournaments.

This year's winners were Central (combined from Manawatu, Wellington, Wairarapa, Hawkes Bay and Taranaki). This is the second time they have won the Shield, the last time in 1995. Deaf sportspeople have really



Teams from some of the sporting codes entered this year

enjoyed the challenge of playing each other in their chosen sports.

Events and Sponsorship Co-ordinator, Annette Scott, of the Manawatu Deaf Society says the Games were a great success. The organising committee worked really hard to make the games successful with intensive planning and preparation. "The games are most important to the Deaf Community as it brings the Deaf together in one location to compete on equal terms with each other", says Annette. "With financial assistance that makes it easier for more Deaf people to be involved with the games, and feel their being Deaf is not a handicap at all," she says.

"On behalf of the Millennium Deaf Games Organising Committee, we would like to thank The Oticon Foundation for their kind and generous support, and the ease it made towards running such an event. We also wish to thank other sponsors for their generous financial contributions," says Annette.

the oticon foundation

International sign language scholar visits



Dr Carol Padden

Noted international Deaf linguist and Fulbright Scholar, Dr Carol Padden, was the key presenter on "Sign Language and Literacy for Deaf Learners" at Victoria University November 24-26 last year. Dr Padden is Chair of the Communication Department at the University of California at San Diego.

Around 150 delegates attended the workshop which focused on bridges between signing, fingerspelling and literacy, and identifying and assessing NZSL skills for Deaf learners.

Dr Padden, who is Deaf herself, comes from a Deaf family, which adds to her standing among Deaf people. Amongst other things, she studies Deaf children as bilingual learners, which is still a new approach in New Zealand.

The education of generations of Deaf children has led to very poor outcomes due to attendance at schools in which sign language use was forbidden. Dr Padden's recent research has focused on the acquisition of reading and writing skills by children who use sign language as a primary language. She brings methods of linguistic analysis and participant observations in classrooms, as well as her deep knowledge of the social and cultural resources of Deaf people to her work.

The Oticon Foundation provided a grant to Victoria University Deaf Studies to assist with hosting Dr Padden's seminar, who came to New Zealand as a Fulbright distinguished American scholar. Dr Rachel McKee, Programme Director of Deaf Studies at Victoria University, says this seminar attracted the largest gathering of professionals in Deaf education seen in recent years, including a larger proportion of Deaf participants than ever before. Research findings and ideas presented by Dr Padden generated a high level of interest amongst participants, who left with many new practical ideas for utilising sign language effectively in the development of literacy. Dr McKee thanks The Oticon Foundation for their support in making this event possible.

Sponsorship for better community hearing

Parishioners in Helensville, Whangarei schools, a community house in Dunedin and the National Audiology Centre will all experience better hearing due to sponsorship of assistive listening systems.

These involve affordable wireless amplification and receiver systems. The FM system amplifies sounds from a microphone to either a room or a personal receiver. An infrared system emits a signal that is detected by a receiver worn by a hearing impaired person, and a loop system emits a low frequency signal that can be picked up by a telecoil in a standard hearing aid.

Karen Pullar, Secretary to the Trustees of The Oticon Foundation in NZ, says that the Foundation is pleased to support the purchase of assistive listening systems for projects that raise awareness of accessibility barriers, and for not-for-profit organisations that could not otherwise afford them. "Many thousands of New Zealanders are benefiting from access to buildings that have effective listening technology installed," she says.

"It must not be under-estimated how many New Zealanders are missing out on effective participation in group activities, simply for want of an assistive listening system," says Ms Pullar.

Local academic attends World Congress

Senior Lecturer in Audiology, Dr Mark Flynn, was co-sponsored by The Oticon Foundation and the University of Canterbury to attend the World Congress of Audiology in The Hague, 27-31 August 2000. The conference was attended by audiologists and researchers from around the world, providing Dr Flynn with many valuable networking opportunities.

Dr Flynn presented a paper *Comparison of Speech Processing Differences and Similarities between Cochlear Implant Users and Hearing Aid Users*. "My paper was well attended and generated some lively discussion," said Dr Flynn. The paper will also be presented at the NZ Audiological Society's 2001 Conference in July this year, so that local audiologists can benefit from this research.

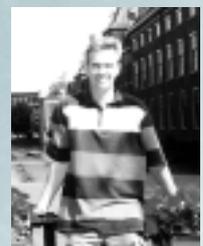
Dr Flynn took the opportunity to visit Eriksholm, Oticon's research centre in Denmark. "This visit allowed me to spend time

discussing pure and applied research and to gain from the researchers' vast experience and knowledge," he said.

A visit was also arranged to Oticon's headquarters in Copenhagen, Denmark, where more applied research is conducted.

"This allowed me the opportunity to spend time with the senior clinical audiologist, Dr Paul Davis, and the executive scientist, Poul Erik Lyregard. It was a rare opportunity to discuss present and future research directions with one of the leaders of the field."

Dr Flynn says he is keen to collaborate with Oticon on projects that will ensure that hearing impaired people in New Zealand continue to benefit from the cutting edge of hearing instrument design and fitting. "I am grateful to The Oticon Foundation in NZ for supporting this project," he said.



Dr Mark Flynn

Low educational achievement linked to inadequate children's hearing services

The early detection and intervention of infant hearing loss is critical for normal social, cultural and educational development. But in New Zealand, hearing loss is being picked up too late and then, help is only being provided to those with significant problems.



Newborn screening.

Two international researchers were able to present their research findings to the New Zealand Audiological Society's (NZAS) conference in Rotorua in August last year, thanks to two separate grants; one to the NZAS, the other to the NZ Association of Advisors on Deaf Children.

Newborn screening

Dr Terence Picton of the Rotman Research Institute in Ontario, Canada, claims that delayed and inadequate testing of hearing in children means that they are unnecessarily left to develop permanent negative consequences.

"The age at which New Zealand children are commonly diagnosed (21 months) with hearing loss is too late. By two years, the hearing centres in a baby's brain have missed out on forming the vital connections to the speech and language centres," said Dr Picton. "A simple test is available to screen babies before they reach 6 months, but is not widely available nor mandatory in New Zealand."

In the USA twenty-four States have mandatory Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Programmes and twelve other States have laws in progress. Several Australian States are implementing universal Newborn Hearing Screening Programmes.



"Hearing loss is the *Dr Terence Picton*

most common congenital birth defect. It occurs 10 to 100 times more frequently than most of the other disorders that New Zealand babies are screened for at birth (the Guthrie test). The affects of hearing loss negatively impact on speech, language and cognitive development," he said.

A number of initiatives for new-born hearing screening are being developed in New Zealand.

Dr Picton said, "If you want children to have the best possible chance of reaching their full potential, the evidence for screening at birth is overwhelming". Dr Picton has developed a new objective testing procedure for assessing hearing in newborns. It tests both ears simultaneously and is not invasive. Dr Picton was hosted by the NZAS.

One in 20 children affected

Another keynote speaker, Dr Fred Bess, Professor of Hearing and Speech Sciences at Vanderbilt University, USA presented evidence that children with minimal hearing loss are dramatically disadvantaged in their educational achievements.

"My research shows that one in 20

children have a permanent mild hearing loss and 37% of these fail at least one grade at school, compared to a district norm rate of 3%. More than half these children experience difficulty in academic learning, attention, and communication. Perhaps even more interesting is the finding that children with this mild hearing loss exhibit greater social and emotional dysfunction than their normal hearing counterparts in stress, self esteem, behaviour, and energy," said Dr Bess.

"At any one time in a classroom, 11.3% of children may have a hearing loss. At least half of these children have a permanent hearing loss. It's extremely disturbing when we already know our classrooms are very noisy and cause distress even for those with good hearing," he said. "But those responsible for assisting children with special needs should urgently recognise and allocate resource to help children with minor problems. The compounding effect of not assisting this group is chronic underachievement."

Dr Bess stated that New Zealand health funding authorities needed to improve their efforts to identify and manage this population of children at high risk of failure. Services such as those provided by Advisers on Deaf Children should be extended to cover those with mild hearing loss, he said. Given that a mild hearing loss interferes with the child's ability to understand speech in classroom type environments, he strongly recommends the use of assistive listening devices for these children.

Greater efforts to identify and manage this group of children would result in an improvement in their educational performance and functional health status, according to Dr Bess. It could also result in substantial cost savings to New Zealand's education system. Dr Bess' visit was hosted by the NZ Association Advisors on Deaf Children.

Oticon Foundation Grant Recipients 2000

PRESBYTERIAN SUPPORT SERVICES – Provision of sign language interpreters for Parenting Course for Deaf parents

ALANA BEST, DEAF STUDENT – Provision of Sign Language Interpreter for school trip to Japan

DUNEDIN COMMUNITY HOUSE TRUST – Audio Loop Amplification system for meeting room

ST JOSEPH'S PRESBYTERY, HELENSVILLE – Audio Loop Amplification systems for churches at Helensville and Huapai

TOYS FOR SPECIAL CHILDREN – FM Sound-Field Amplification System for demonstration in Whangarei area

NATIONAL AUDIOLOGY CENTRE – FM Sound-Field Amplification System for Conference and Training Room

NZ FEDERATION FOR DEAF CHILDREN INC – Items for Family Information Kit, including Ottos

NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR THE DEAF – Hearing Services Ltd – Audiometers and Otoscopes for Hearing Education and Awareness to Maori and Pacific Island Populations in South and West Auckland

HEARING ASSOCIATION, HOROWHENUA – Audiometer

HEARING ASSOCIATION, TAURANGA – Audiometer

HEARING ASSOCIATION, NELSON – Funding to distribute more “Hear More or Less” Kits to New Zealand Schools

NZ AUDIOLOGICAL SOCIETY – For Dr Terence Picton of the Rotman Research Institute in Ontario, Canada – keynote speaker at 2000 NZAS conference

NZ ASSOCIATION OF ADVISERS ON DEAF CHILDREN – For Dr Fred Bess, Professor of Hearing and Speech Sciences at Vanderbilt University, USA – keynote speaker at 2000 NZAS conference

SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS ASSOCIATION OF NZ – For Jemina Napier, British Interpreter, keynote speaker at National Convention

VAN ASCH DEAF EDUCATION CENTRE – For Judith Simser, Director and Clinical Advisor of Children's Hearing Foundation, Taipei – keynote speaker at Auditory-Verbal Therapy Workshop

THE HEARING HOUSE – For Dr Sylvia Rominik – keynote speaker in at National Auditory-Verbal Therapy Workshop and Parents Education Forum

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY – For Dr Carol Padden, Chair of Communication Department, University of California, San Diego, USA – keynote speaker at Sign Language and Literacy for Deaf Learners workshop

UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY – Travel grant to attend and present a paper at the World Congress of Audiology in The Hague and visit to Eriksholm Research Centre

KELSTON DEAF EDUCATION CENTRE – Travel Grant to attend and present a paper at Deaf History International Conference, Gallaudet University, Washington, USA

ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF DEAF – Travel Grant for delegate to attend ICED Sydney 2000 Conference

TANIA SIMON, TEACHER, FLUENT IN TE REO MAORI – Study Grant – Sign Language Interpreter

CHERYL ANTON, DEAF TEACHER OF THE DEAF – Study Grant – Master of Education – Administration

JOHN WOOD, ADVISER ON DEAF CHILDREN – Study Grant – Master of Educational Psychology

NEW ZEALAND GAMES FOR THE DEAF – Funding for Millennium Deaf Games

OTICON NZ – Travel Grant for three audiologists to attend International Human Link Conference in USA

Closing date for next grant applications – March 31, 2001

how to apply for grants

Applications must include:

1. The name and address of applicant
2. If relevant, the organisation represented and position of applicant within the organisation, plus copies of latest balance sheet and annual report
3. Details of expenditure involved
4. Information about funding you are seeking from any other organisation for this or supplementary projects
5. Overseas travel details where applicable. Please state whether applicant/s will be returning to New Zealand permanently after the visit is completed
6. How the hearing impaired in New Zealand will benefit from your project/research
7. Information about how you will publicise your project and its results. (We would like you to seek as wide an audience as possible)
8. Details about how you will promote the Oticon Foundation if your application is successful

Applicants applying for project funding should also include:

1. Title of project
2. Summary of project (not exceeding 150 words)
3. Qualifications of applicant relevant to project
4. Aims and design of project, and expected completion date

Applications for grants other than project funding should also include:

1. Details of grant requested
2. Reasons for request

Successful applicants will be required to:

1. Submit a report (five copies) within three months of completion of the project
2. Disseminate results or information from the project to as wide an audience as possible, such as to the bulletins and newsletters of professional groups, hearing impaired and Deaf groups
3. Acknowledge the Oticon Foundation in any reports or publications about your project/research

deadline

Grants are allocated annually.

Applications (together with four extra copies) should be made no later than 31 March in any year to:

The Secretary
Oticon Foundation in New Zealand
C/- PO Box 9128, Te Aro
WELLINGTON
Phone: 0800 OTICON
E-mail: info@oticon.org.nz