

soundscape

NEWSLETTER OF THE OTICON FOUNDATION IN NEW ZEALAND



At this time of the year the Oticon Foundation seeks applications for grants for projects to improve the lives of those with hearing impairment.

While this is an annual event, every time we do it, it brings home to me the value of these grants for the hearing impaired community.

It's startling to think that the Oticon Foundation was established in New Zealand nearly 30 years ago. That's almost three decades of projects, research and initiatives to improve the lives of those with hearing impairment.

I recently took time out to glance through some of the projects the Oticon Foundation has supported over the years, and was again impressed by the depth and breadth of work that has received financial assistance.

It also gave me time to reflect on the purpose and rationale for the Oticon Foundation. It is easy to forget these things when

caught up in the day-to-day detail of the Foundation.

The Foundation exists to improve the lives of the hearing impaired in New Zealand through communication and knowledge. That means helping to find better solutions to hearing loss and to increase public awareness and understanding of hearing impairment.

A lot of people are passionate about improving the quality of life of the hearing impaired, with ideas for research and projects to help do this and the only thing holding them back is the money. The Oticon Foundation uses its funds to help turn that passion into reality.

Applications for this year's grants close on 31 March. In the meantime, please take a closer look at the stories in this edition of Soundscape. They give you an insight into some of the work that has been supported and also gives you more information about the Foundation.

Karen Pullar, Secretary to the Trustees

New Classrooms, New Speech Enhancement Systems, New Sense of Calm

A brand new classroom block opened at Kelston Girls' High School in Auckland in the middle of last year. And with the new classrooms has come a new sense of calm.

Thanks in part to the three Oticon Easy Listener Speech Enhancement Systems that have been installed, following an Oticon Foundation Grant to the school's deaf unit.

"The Easy Listener systems make it much easier for the students and teachers. The classrooms are quieter and calmer. We're all noticing the difference," says Margaret Carr, senior teacher and Head of the Deaf Unit at Kelston Girls' High School.

The school's deaf unit is a satellite unit of the Kelston Deaf Education Centre.

The unit applied for an Oticon Foundation grant for three Easy Listener systems after they had investigated the research into the systems and seen them working for other students.

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31 March 2005 Deadline for Applications for Oticon Foundation Grants

The Oticon Foundation was established nearly 30 years ago, and during that time has helped support work that benefits the hearing impaired in fields as diverse as sport, music, theatre, research and academia, and to help babies and children.

We have helped open doors for many New Zealanders seeking to learn from overseas experience and findings. We do this because we are committed to finding better solutions to hearing loss, and to increasing public awareness and understanding of hearing impairment.

We have supported deaf athletes and sports teams. We've funded ground breaking research, such as that by Michael Heeney into creating enhanced learning environments through the use of speech enhancement systems and Oriole Wilson's research into Classroom Acoustics in New Zealand schools.

The Oticon Foundation Grants Committee has five members – three

from New Zealand and two from Denmark. The Danish connection brings with it expertise and research specialists that assess projects for their benefit internationally.

We are currently calling for applications for grants from the Oticon Foundation for the 2005 year.

Applications close 31 March

The Oticon Foundation wants to support projects and organisations that:

- disseminate knowledge about hearing and hearing loss
- help remedy hearing loss
- improve the quality of life for hearing impaired individuals and their families
- break down the stigma of hearing loss

Details about how to apply and the criteria can be found on the back page of this newsletter. More information is also available at www.oticon.org.nz/grantAppli.htm

Info on Hearing Impairment Being Updated

An updated picture of hearing impairment in New Zealand will be released shortly.

Dr Anne Greville has been analysing new data from the 2001 Census to provide a more up-to-date description of information about hearing impaired people in New Zealand.

The report will look at the number of hearing impaired and deaf people and incidence of hearing loss as a factor of age, gender and where possible, race.

Dr Greville was awarded funding from

the Oticon Foundation in 2004 to support her work on this project.

It is expected that Dr Greville's report will be available

from the Oticon Foundation website in March. Check out www.oticon.org.nz/grantRep.htm for a copy of it.



Dr Anne Greville



Kelston Girls' High School *continued*

"We were getting a brand new, large building for our hearing impaired students, and we knew we had an opportunity to take steps to help improve student achievement," says Margaret.

The old deaf unit was built for seven students and two staff – but the school has over 20 students and a dozen staff now who are housed in the new three classroom facility.

"Our students are typical teenagers and are very aware of their appearance and what peers think of them. This means many of them won't use personal FM systems, even though many of them would benefit from them," says Margaret.

"This is the main reason we wanted Easy Listener systems in our new building."

The students have access to the curriculum by more than one avenue – through the sign-language interpreters and enhanced speech from the teacher. Staff also benefit from an acoustically positive environment that presents less strain on the voice, and that's making it easier for students to pay attention to what teachers are saying.

The Oticon Easy Listener Speech Enhancement System operates through FM radio signals, with teacher and student voices transmitted wirelessly to speakers. They can be tuned to operate on the same frequency as the students' personal FM systems.

"The students really like it. They appear to be concentrating better," says Margaret.

"It's also helping them to differentiate when they need to look up from their work and pay attention to the teacher or something else in the class."

Evidence for Newborn Hearing Screening Programme Released

The case for a national newborn hearing screening and early intervention programme has been presented to the Government.

The Project HIEDI team believes the delivery of the evidence based case marks a significant step forward. HIEDI is still firmly focused on its objective of seeing a national newborn hearing screening programme implemented in New Zealand.

“The case has been prepared and released. We presented it to the Minister for Disability Issues and Labour MPs just before Christmas,” says Janet Digby, Project HIEDI Project Manager.

“We’ve done a lot to raise awareness about

the need for a screening programme, and we are feeling very positive about the future.”

Project HIEDI was the recipient of an Oticon Foundation grant last year to help support its work.

“We are working closely with hearing care professionals to try to develop protocols and best practice for dealing with young children. While this work will be invaluable once a screening programme gets underway, it will be extremely helpful to health professionals right now,” says Janet.

Copies of the case for a newborn hearing screening programme and intervention “Improving Outcomes for Children



with Permanent Congenital Hearing Impairment,” and a summary brochure “Right from the Start” are available online at www.nfd.org.nz/nfdnews/projecthiedi or by emailing hiedi@nfd.org.nz

Major Study into Auditory Processing Disorders

A major study has started at The University of Auckland into ways to help children with auditory processing disorders.

Details about the study were revealed to health and education professionals at the first continuing education course late last year at the Oticon Foundation Hearing Education Centre at The University of Auckland.

“Over 100 hearing care, health and educational professionals attended the seminar at the Oticon Foundation’s Hearing Education Centre in mid December,” says Peter Thorne, Associate Professor and Head of Audiology at The University of Auckland.

“The course focused on auditory processing disorders (APD) and intervention, and attracted people from a range of disciplines, including audiologists, speech language therapists, pediatricians and advisors on deaf children.

“Children with learning difficulties can be seen by a wide range of professionals, and we need to encourage them to always consider APD as a possible factor.

“The first continuing education course at the



Speakers at the first Oticon Foundation Hearing Education Centre continuing education seminar in December. Dr Suzanne Purdy, Dr Andrea Kelly, Ms Sally Kedge, Dr Mridula Sharma, Ms Maree Harper (left to right)

Centre gave us the opportunity to raise awareness of the condition, and explain the latest research findings on diagnosis and interventions,” says Dr Thorne.

The new study into APD will involve about 100 children. It aims to improve diagnosis and to find the most effective interventions to help children overcome the disorder.

The Oticon Foundation Hearing Education Centre is currently planning its programme of continuing education courses, including overseas speakers. Details will be available shortly at www.health.auckland.ac.nz/audiology.

By Email or in the Post?

The Soundscape newsletter is published in both printed and electronic versions. Would you prefer to get your copy of Soundscape by email? If yes send your details – your name, organisation, postal address and email address to info@oticon.org.nz and we’ll send you September’s edition by email. To check out the online version today go to www.oticon.org.nz/soundscapes.htm

Oticon Foundation grant recipients 2004

DR ANNE GREVILLE – for research on the incidence of hearing impairment in New Zealand

CAROL SMITH Teacher Aid for Deaf Students – study grant, Deaf Studies at Victoria University

DEAF ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND Wellington Branch – funding room hire for community meetings

GEORGINA MAJOR – study grant to attend sign language research conference in Spain

KELSTON DEAF EDUCATION CENTRE – equipment grant for sound-field systems for Kelston Girls' High School

KELSTON DEAF EDUCATION CENTRE Judith Lemberg, Speech Language Therapist – study grant to attend newborn hearing screening conference in Italy

MAUREEN GIBBS audiologist – study grant to attend Tinnitus Retraining Therapy Workshop in Wellington

NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR THE DEAF – for the reprint of Sound Advice

NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR THE DEAF – Project Hiedi for the establishment of universal newborn hearing screening

NEW ZEALAND AUDIOLOGICAL SOCIETY – for Dr Paul Davis, Associate Professor of Health Sciences, Curtin University of Technology, speaker at 2004 NZAS Conference

NEW ZEALAND SIGN LANGUAGE TUTORS ASSOCIATION – funding for National Conference

WENDY POLUDORE audiologist – study grant to complete Doctorate in Audiology

VAN ASCH DEAF EDUCATION CENTRE Daphne Rickson – to reproduce CD for hearing impaired children

VAN ASCH DEAF EDUCATION CENTRE Evette Griffiths, Speech Language Therapist – study grant to attend Logopedics and Phoniatrics conference in Brisbane

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 an 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 five extra copies) should be made no later than 31 March in any year. Applicants will be notified whether their grant application has been accepted by 30 June of the same year. Please address applications to:

The Secretary
Oticon Foundation in New Zealand
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WELLINGTON
Phone: 0800 OTICON
E-mail: info@oticon.org.nz

www.oticon.org.nz