

soundscape

NOVEMBER 2000

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.

The Foundation is concerned about questions of accessibility. How can we ensure that those with hearing loss are able to participate fully in society? In this edition of *Soundscape*, we look at the benefits of hearing loop systems and the work of the

National Foundation for the Deaf in terms of highlighting these issues. The launch of this year's Deaf Awareness Week 20-26 November provides an opportunity to focus national attention on making our buildings more accessible. The Oticon Foundation is pleased to be associated with this event and the launch of two new Oticon Foundation-sponsored publications that will aid understanding of assistive listening systems.

Karen Pullar, Secretary to the Trustees



Deaf Awareness Week

Deaf Awareness Week is an annual event of significance to New Zealand's deaf and hearing impaired communities. This year it is to be held from 20-26 November commencing with a launch at the Aotea Centre. In association with the National Foundation for the Deaf Inc and Oticon NZ Ltd, the Foundation will launch two new publications that it has sponsored: *Sound Access – an introduction to assistive listening systems*; and *Assistive Listening Systems – a guide for architects and consultants*.

Both publications deal with the various types of systems that can assist those with hearing impairment. Three technologies (Audio Loops, FM and InfraRed) can be used to eliminate the effects of distance, reverberation and background noise, and provide amplification and clarity. Also in common, each technology uses a transmitter to send sounds to a receiver

wirelessly.

Each of the three types of system has unique features designed to overcome potential listening difficulties. If

you would like to obtain copies of the *Sound Access* brochure, or if you require more detailed technical information available in the architect's guide, please contact the Foundation.



Deaf History

Susan Hamilton, the School Archivist at Kelston Deaf Education Centre presented a paper with Mrs Eileen Smith, the Centre Principal, at the 4th International Conference on Deaf History held at Gallaudet University in Washington DC in June. The paper was "Recording Deaf Education History in New Zealand" and covered aspects of the establishment and maintenance of a museum and archive. The paper was very well-received and the database cross-

referencing system was of particular interest. "We were congratulated for our commitment to Deaf History by employing a fulltime school archivist," says Susan. The British Deaf History Society has asked to publish the paper in their journal and Sweden expressed strong interest in having a similar presentation made to their eight schools.

As part of her travel grant, Susan was able to attend a pre-conference preserving and teaching workshop. "It was a rewarding experience for me to learn some dos and don'ts of material handling, and to meet

so many deaf people doing Deaf Community history."

One of the outcomes of her conference attendance is that Susan is aware of further research that needs to be completed here. A group is now working towards establishing a Deaf History Society in New Zealand.

"I appreciate the Oticon Foundation supporting me in reaching my goal of gathering information and improving my working knowledge of archive work," says Susan.

the oticon foundation



Darling Harbour Conference Centre

Raewyn Donnell, a teacher of the Deaf at Kelston Boys High School Deaf Unit and Secretary of the Association of Teachers of the Deaf (NZ) reports on her grant to represent Association members at the "19th International Congress on Education of the Deaf" that ran in conjunction with the "Asia Pacific Conference on Deafness" in Sydney from 9–13 July.

My first impressions of the Congress were mainly concerned with the sheer scale of the thing! There were over 1000 registrars and more than 400 presenters!

The setting was wonderful. Sydney at its best is a beautiful city and we were lucky to have good weather. Mind you I don't remember getting out of the conference hall much! Sessions started at 8.30 am with the Plenary Addresses and most days the last address was at 6 pm, so they were full-on days. It was a wrench to miss any but choices had to be made, and the sessions I attended were extremely valuable and informative. Then after a meal and a chat it was time to head back to our various hotels and fall into bed ready to be up early the next day!

It was amazing to see some of the people about whom I had only read, actually standing talking to us! Some examples would be I. King Jordan, Mark Marschark, Loretta Giorcelli, Carol Erting, Carl Kirchner and Jan van Dijk. It felt strange to be sitting with people whose articles I had read! And I

Confronting barriers to Deaf theatre

The Foundation provided a grant in 1997 to Arts Access Aotearoa. Recently Director Penny Eames commented that there is evidence that the barriers towards deaf theatre are starting to come down.

"With our grant we set about to build awareness of the role the arts can play and to set in place mechanisms that would give access to the performing and visual arts for people with hearing impairment and the deaf," says Ms Eames. "We interviewed hundreds of people in

the deaf community, those involved with the arts, funding agencies and a number of other key groups and individuals.

"Through that work we were able to confront and reduce the impact of the many barriers that existed towards deaf theatre," she says. "In fact, our own opinions were the first to be confronted and that is something we are grateful for."

As a result of the initial grant and their development work in exploring deaf theatre, Arts Access Aotearoa

has continued to advocate for deaf theatre. Penny says that their role in encouraging groups to breathe life into their projects is much like yeast: "We go in at the beginning, but we're not really noticeable at the end, and that's the way it should be."

And deaf theatre should not be considered as being only for deaf audiences, says Penny. "One of our key conclusions from our earlier study was of the tremendous power of deaf theatre to communicate to hearing audiences."

Teachers of the Deaf

have to say, they were all approachable and friendly, even if some did appear a little jetlagged!

One of the many benefits of my attending this congress was to enable me to make contact with the Teachers of the Deaf Association in Australia. Indeed I was made to feel extremely welcome and well looked after there! The Australian Teachers of the Deaf desk became a second home where messages were left and picked up and we arranged to meet!

On the Thursday afternoon Kay Pinion and myself managed to meet with John Richards, (the Australian Association President) to discuss further contact between our groups. He is fully in favour of us becoming more closely aligned through newsletters and in the future possible exchanges.

He has extended an invitation to us to send representation to their next full conference in March next year so that we may become part of the planning committee for the next conference in 2003.

Following that conference, it is expected that New Zealand will host the 2006 Conference, so planning and sharing strategies would be of extreme value.

I would like to thank the Oticon Foundation very sincerely for enabling me to go to this congress. Without their kind support it would not have been possible for me to attend. I would also like to acknowledge the support of Kelston Deaf Education Centre.



L-R: Kay Pinion Association of Teachers of the Deaf (NZ), John Richards President of the Australian Association of Teachers of the Deaf, Raewyn Donnell Secretary, Association of Teachers of the Deaf (NZ)

Support for theatregoers

People with hearing impairment can now enjoy a full sound experience at Downstage Theatre, following the installation of a high-tech hearing loop. And users are thrilled with the results.

The Downstage Theatre Society Inc has raised funds to ensure the Theatre is fully accessible by the community. “We have been concerned for some time that many people have difficulty following dialogue, despite wearing a hearing aid,” said Ms Rachel Underwood, Society President. “The new loop system is something we have wanted for a long time, but until recently, we have been unable to find a technology suitable for a theatre that changes its configuration for different productions.”

Typical problems for people with hearing impairment include being seated at a distance too far from the actors, reverberation leading to blurry sound, and background noise that can drown out sounds from in front.

“Theatregoers who use a hearing aid are totally enthusiastic, because they often stop going to the theatre due to the difficulties they face. We’re absolutely delighted to bring the magic of theatre back to this group



Photo courtesy of the Evening Post.

Sharon Matthews tests out the new loop at Downstage Theatre.

within the Wellington community,” said Ms Underwood.

Downstage has been assisted by the Foundation to identify a loop installer who could meet the challenges posed by the Theatre, publicising the hearing loop service, providing brochures and posters to alert hearing aid users to the loop’s existence, and sponsoring staff training.

Ms Sharon Matthews of the Costume Cave, who is profoundly deaf, has tested the new loop and is very impressed by the sound clarity. “The sound used to bounce off the walls and

my hearing aids picked up background noise. Most theatres are so bad that I sometimes require interpretation or have to rely on lip reading the actors. Now I can focus on the whole production – it’s fantastic,” she said.

“It’s a real step forward to create a disabled-friendly theatre and I’m just amazed and very grateful that Downstage has done this – why don’t other theatres?” said Ms Matthews. One additional benefit is that theatregoers can now sit anywhere in the theatre and hear perfectly she said.

Assistance for sign language interpreters

The Sign Language Interpreters Association of New Zealand Inc (SLIANZ) held their national convention in Auckland from 30 June – 2 July this year. Keynote presenter was Jemina Napier, a British interpreter working in Australia, sponsored by the Foundation. This year’s conference was an opportunity



Delegates at the SLIANZ Conference

for interpreters to get an insight into how they cope in interpreting situations. Jemina provided ‘food for thought’ on how to prepare, including prediction skills, language register, time management and organisational skills. Feedback from attendees shows enormous benefit was obtained. New Zealand interpreters are struggling with the same issues as their counterparts worldwide. Past president, Kaye Bird, says that SLIANZ is extremely grateful to receive grants from the Oticon Foundation, having received these continuously since 1997. The grants have enabled high quality professional development activities that have benefited interpreters, teachers, parents and Deaf people.



Jemina Napier, speaking at the SLIANZ Conference

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