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MEDIA RELEASE

Oticon Foundation grants \$120,000 to hearing loss projects

Improving classroom acoustics, supporting specialist training and furthering research into hearing impairment and Deafness are just a few of the projects that have received funding this year from the Oticon Foundation in New Zealand.

Thirty-three projects benefiting the lives of the hearing impaired in New Zealand have received funding from the Oticon Foundation says Chairman Tim Olphert. "The standard of grant proposals received this year has been impressive and this has resulted in the Foundation increasing its grant allocation to \$120,000," says Mr Olphert.

"We have given priority to projects which will help New Zealand children with their reading, language and literacy," he says. "Hearing loss in children is often unrecognised and undiagnosed, with many 'behaviour problems' actually being due to hearing problems and the consequential expression of frustration by the child. Children with only a mild hearing loss are 12 times more likely to fail educationally than normal hearing children, and we are pleased to contribute significantly towards further research and education in this very important area."

Mr Olphert says the other important area of focus this year has been on making public buildings, facilities and conferences accessible to the Deaf and hearing impaired.

The Oticon Foundation in New Zealand was established in 1976 as a charitable trust by leading hearing aid manufacturer Oticon NZ Ltd.

Oticon General Manager Karen Pullar says, "Oticon NZ is a socially-responsible business producing high-quality hearing aids based on leading-edge research."

"Oticon NZ does business in a way that positively contributes to society," said Ms Pullar. "We are delighted that other New Zealanders can benefit from Oticon NZ's success."

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