soundscape

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.

FEBRUARY 2002

$120,000 IN GRANTS TO HEARING LOSS PROJECTS

Inside this issue of *Soundscape* we've included details about a few of the 31 projects supported by the Oticon Foundation in 2001, to enhance the level of knowledge about hearing and hearing loss and improve the quality of life for the hearing impaired.

In the 26 years that the Oticon Foundation in New Zealand has been operating our aim has always been to fund projects that increase awareness and knowledge about hearing loss, to break down the stigma it is so often associated with.

If you have a new project that would contribute in this way, we would like to hear from you. The closing date for applications is 31 March 2002. The application information is printed on the back page of this issue of *Soundscape* along with a list of last year's recipients. We look forward to receiving your application.

Karen Pullar, Secretary to the Trustees

New look at the prevalence of hearing impairment in New Zealand

Information concerning the population of hearing impaired and deaf people in New Zealand has not been widely available in the past, with the first population survey of any size being carried out in 1991. Dr Anne Greville (former Director of the National Audiology Centre) in her report *Hearing impaired and Deaf people in New Zealand* has updated the population estimates and included the extra information available from projects associated with the 1996 and 2001 censuses, as well as data available from databases kept by the National Audiology Centre. Results show that the prevalence of hearing loss varies from 10.3%, or just under 400,000 people (for people reporting hearing loss) to 0.24%, or 2,800 children with permanent hearing loss accessing funding for hearing aids.

Men are much more likely to suffer from hearing loss than women. This difference is similar to that found in other developed countries and appears to be attributable to occupational noise-induced hearing loss. In total, 90,400 more New Zealand men than women report hearing loss. When it comes to reporting disability caused by hearing loss, 31,500 more men than women report this. According to Dr Greville, "it appears that the reason for the difference in hearing problems between men and woman is occupational noise exposure."

Men are more likely to be employed in the 'noisy sectors' such as agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining and construction. Between 1981 and 1996 there was a decrease in the proportion of people employed in these sectors from 45% to 36%. Dr Greville says that despite this decline and the introduction of Health and Safety legislation, many of the smaller 'owner operator' industries which employ the greatest number of people are not putting hearing conservation practices in place.

"The difference in incidence of hearing problems between men and women is evident from the age of 25," says Dr Greville. "As women live longer than men, the number of men and women over the age of 75 with hearing loss is about the same."

Incidence in New Zealand is different to other populations (USA, United Kingdom, and parts of Europe). There is a higher overall prevalence of hearing loss, particularly among children (8% of all New Zealand children beginning school have hearing loss which will significantly affect their ability to learn), and an ethnic effect – with higher prevalence of hearing loss among Maori and Pacific Island children. 15% of Pacific Island children and 13.5% of Maori children start school with hearing loss, putting them at much higher risk of educational failure than their Pakeha peers.

Dr Greville says these statistics are significant because the early years of schooling are the most important in terms of how children will succeed in the education system. "We already know from research that most of our classrooms are too noisy and make poor listening environments for even those with good hearing so the children with hearing problems are at a double disadvantage when it comes to learning."

Grants to study family-centred early intervention

Last year, four applicants received Oticon Foundation funding to attend the Masters in Special Education Block Course on Family Support and Early Intervention In Sensory Disability at Renwick College, Sydney.

The five-day course involved readings and an assignment prior to the course, three days studying family support and early intervention issues and models, with the final two days focusing on the assessment needs of Deaf and hearing-impaired children.

The four recipients were Teachers of the Deaf: Kathleen Bruce, Jill Mustard, Janet Wilson; and Adviser on Deaf Children, Val Smith.

Kathleen Bruce says that the emphasis was on family-centred early childhood. "Rather than a child-centred approach, the focus was on the child's development and well-being within the context of the family system and the wider community. Family-centred intervention takes account of the whole family and is respectful of, and responsive to, family diversity. It builds on family strengths rather than focusing on deficits or weaknesses."

"One of the presenters of the course, Jan North stressed that it is our job as educators to ensure that families can make informed choices and to empower them so that they become 'the stars'."

Assessments of children are carried out mainly to make a diagnosis, ascertain correct placement, identify areas for development and monitor progress. Kathleen says there has been a shift of emphasis in assessing children in three areas -location, philosophy and purpose. This has meant a move from:

- clinically-based assessments to assessments in more natural settings
- a medical pathology model to an educational model looking at environmental adaptability
- an 'expert' model to one involving parents
- consideration of individual needs to family needs
- a 'snapshot in time' assessments to ongoing monitoring, and
- infrequent contact to continuous intervention.

In summing up, Kathleen says that, "as professionals we need to have empathy for the depth of parents' feelings and recognise the knowledge parents have of their own children, valuing the information they can provide. We must recognise that family concerns may be different from our own concerns and that family concerns must take priority. Family-centred early childhood intervention involves treating families as partners and active participants in obtaining the support and resources they need, instead of passively receiving assistance. We need to understand the challenges and stresses faced by each family and strengthen their links to supportive networks."

Whangarei School receives Grant to buy Soundfield

Raumanga School, a decile one school in Whangarei, received funding last year from the Oticon Foundation for a Soundfield to put in a classroom that had four children with long term hearing loss due to "glue ear" (Chronic Otitis Media).

Principal Paul Ellis says that although the Soundfield was installed to support these 4 children, the system was a great help to all of the children in the classroom. "Many of the children in our school suffer hearing loss to some degree, either by having had or currently having glue ear."

"The feedback from the staff and the children has been excellent and all children are benefiting from the improved hearing environment not just the ones with hearing impairment."

The school now has three Soundfields installed in the school, after receiving sponsorship for one from the Lion Foundation, through the Whangarei Grand Hotel, and by the school purchasing one itself.

At the end of 2001, Raumanga School ceased to exist merging with Raumanga Middle School and a new school Manaia View, with 260 children, opened this year. The Principal is still Paul Ellis and he says the three Soundfields are still being put to good use. It is both his and the Board of Trustees intention that over the next 2-3 years every class will be fitted with a Soundfield.

Manaia View is well supported by the Kelston Deaf Education Centre (KDEC) who have their itinerant teachers of the deaf and the deaf mentor based at the school.

Paul says, "I am very excited about all these developments and hope to work closer with all currently involved to develop further the way we meet the needs of all our students, all inclusive of those who have some degree of hearing impairment."

Sounding out the Stars

The Carter Observatory in Wellington installed two loop systems to make their facilities accessible to the hearing impaired last year after receiving a grant from the Oticon Foundation. The loop systems were launched with a new show in the planetarium called 'The Seven Wonders of the Universe', which incorporated visuals, music and voice-over narration.

Even the most advanced hearing aids find it difficult to manage background noise, the effects of distance and reverberation in crowded public places. Increasing the volume doesn't solve the problem, but a hearing loop does. Loops work by providing a wireless link directly between the sound source and the hearing impaired person.

Loops are a very simple solution for all types of public places. The Building Industry Association News (BIA News) applauded the Carter Observatory in its September 2001 issue. It commented that "the provision of facilities for people with disabilities is not dependent on goodwill and charity. Since the enactment of the Building Act 1991, theatres and public spaces in new buildings and renovated buildings have been required by law to be accessible to people with hearing impairment." Many other public facilities also choose to make their facilities more accessible as funds allow.

The Oticon Foundation encourages more organisations to consider installation of appropriate assistive listening systems, so the whole community can reach for the stars.

Oticon Foundation Grant Recipients 2001

DR ANNE GREVILLE – for research on the incidence of Hearing Impairment in New Zealand

CARTER OBSERVATORY – Audio Loop Amplification Systems for Planetarium and Seminar Rooms

DEAF ASSOCIATION OF NZ – Travel Grant for CEO to attend Deaf Odyssey Conference in Perth

DEAF ASSOCIATION OF NZ, MANAWATU – for workshops for the Deaf on women's health issues.

FOXTON AREA COMMUNITY MEDICAL TRUST – FM Sound Field Amplification System

HEARING ASSOCIATION, MANAWATU – Audiometer

HEARING ASSOCIATION, NELSON – Audiometer

HEARING ASSOCIATION, TIMARU – hearing aid maintenance kits for Timaru Rest Homes

JILL MUSTARD, TEACHER OF THE DEAF – Study Grant – Master of Deaf Education

JANET WILSON, TEACHER OF THE DEAF – Study Grant – Master of Deaf Education

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

JOY ALLCOCK, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST – portable FM Sound Field Amplification System for demonstration

KATHY BRUCE, TEACHER OF THE DEAF – Study Grant – Master of Deaf Education

LOUELLA NEALE – for Sharon Grassick, keynote speaker at workshops in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch

MASSEY UNIVERSITY – Sign Language interpreters for DisAbility in Education Conference

MT ROSKILL PRIMARY SCHOOL ENDEAVOUR CENTRE – FM Sound Field Amplification System

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

NEW ZEALAND AUDIOLOGICAL SOCIETY – for Dr Bronya Keats, Professor of Genetics, Louisiana State University – keynote speaker at 2001 NZAS conference

NEW ZEALAND PHYSIOLOGICAL SOCIETY – funding for speakers at Auditory Function and Dysfunction Symposium

OTICON NZ – Audiology Camp for recent audiology graduates

OTICON NZ – Travel grant to bring expert on Classroom acoustics to New Zealand

RAUMANGA PRIMARY SCHOOL WHANGAREI – FM Sound Field Amplification System

SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS ASSOCIATION OF NZ – Funding for National Convention

SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES, TAI TOKERAU –Project raising awareness of benefits of classroom amplification in Tai Tokerau schools

THE HEARING HOUSE – FM Sound Field Amplification System

UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY for workshops for trainee teachers throughout New Zealand on classroom acoustics and amplification strategies

VAL SMITH, ADVISER ON DEAF CHILDREN – Study Grant – Master of Deaf Education

VAN ASCH DEAF EDUCATION CENTRE – for Christina Perigoe, Keynote Speaker at Auditory-Verbal Therapy Workshop and Parent's Education Forum

VAN ASCH DEAF EDUCATION CENTRE – to make a film with students of Van Asch

VAN ASCH DEAF EDUCATION CENTRE (DAPHNE RICKSON) – to produce a Music Therapy CD for Deaf and hearing impaired children

VOLUNTEER SERVICES ABROAD: supporting the Deaf performers from Apia, Samoa 'Silent World Theatre" nation-wide tour.

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 whethera 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 to:

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