

# soundscape

NEWSLETTER OF THE OTICON FOUNDATION IN NEW ZEALAND



This issue of Soundscape features the findings of research funded by the Oticon Foundation into the benefits of Soundfield amplification systems in classrooms. This research follows earlier funded studies into classroom acoustics and aims to advance our understanding of the sound environment in New Zealand schools, and the role this plays in students' learning.

You'll also read about some of the other initiatives the Foundation has funded over the past year. These projects reflect the range of activities the Foundation supports.

If you have a project that could advance our understanding of hearing impairment or benefit hearing impaired New Zealanders through direct support or reducing the stigma associated with hearing loss, consider applying to the Foundation for a grant. Applications close on 31 March – check out the back page for information on how to apply.

**Karen Pullar, Secretary to the Trustees**

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

INCOME GENERATED  
FROM THE FOUNDATION'S  
INVESTMENTS IS  
DISTRIBUTED TO GROUPS  
AND ORGANISATIONS  
SEEKING FINANCIAL  
SUPPORT FOR  
PROJECTS THAT  
BENEFIT THE HEARING  
IMPAIRED.

FEBRUARY 2004

## Classroom study demonstrates benefits of Soundfields

A recent study funded by a grant from the Oticon Foundation has found that students benefit significantly from the use of Soundfield amplification systems in classrooms.

The study was undertaken by Michael Heeney, a regional co-ordinator for Kelston Deaf Education Centre, as part of his PhD from the University of Newcastle in Australia.

The study involved 626 students at five schools in the Rotorua area and compared the learning achievement of students in classrooms fitted with Soundfield systems with those in classrooms that weren't amplified.

"The study aimed to measure the difference that Soundfields make in New Zealand classrooms. Soundfields have been tested overseas but no formal research had been done here," says Michael.

Soundfields use FM technology to transmit a teacher's voice at a uniformly amplified level to speakers located around a classroom, with the aim of making it easier for students to hear the teacher no matter where they are in the classroom at the time.

The study showed that the Soundfield systems made a significant difference in



*A teacher at one of the schools involved in the study uses the Soundfield system during storytime.*

terms of listening and reading comprehension and the mathematical skills of the students involved.

"The difference between the test scores of the students in classrooms with Soundfields and those without was quite dramatic," says Michael.

"While Soundfields made the greatest difference in low decile schools, the study shows that the systems provide considerable and significant benefits to *all* students regardless of their school, ethnicity, or whether they had middle ear problems."

The students and teachers involved in the study were very positive about the systems. "Children found it easier to hear the teacher

and found the quieter classroom environment more enjoyable. Because they could hear the teacher's answer to other children's questions, their 'incidental' learning increased and they didn't need to ask the question themselves.

"Teachers noticed an increase in attention levels among students and a decrease in disruptive behaviour. They also had higher energy levels from reduced voice strain and not having to repeat questions or instructions."

Michael hopes the research findings will lead to a greater user of Soundfields in New Zealand classrooms. "Soundfields are the single most cost effective intervention a school can invest in to increase literacy outcomes," he says.

# Summer camp a hit with young

Three New Zealanders were among 50 young audiologists from 24 countries that attended the biennial

Eriksholm Summer Camp held in August last year. Joanna Wallace, Emma Towns and Diem Mai attended the

camp held at Oticon's Eriksholm Research Centre in Denmark, funded by grants from the Oticon Foundation.

The five day camp aims to provide an opportunity for young audiologists to gain and exchange knowledge. The programme includes audiological lectures and workshops, along with a range of social networking activities.

Emma Towns described the camp as a once in a lifetime opportunity to meet with so many

audiologists from so many different countries at the one time and in the one place.

"I learnt a lot about how audiology is practised in different countries. I also picked up a number of tips that I've been able to use when selecting and fitting hearing aids with my clients."

Fellow attendee Joanna Wallace says that following the camp she has greater confidence in choosing the right solution for the people she sees in her contrasting roles at the South Auckland Area Health Board and Bay Audiology.

"This has been particularly beneficial when dealing with patients that aren't so straightforward. I have more understanding of how to meet their needs."

Both Joanna and Emma were encouraged to discover that New Zealand is among the leading countries in terms of training and audiological services. "I came away feeling very proud of the level of service we offer in New Zealand," says Emma.



Diem Mai, Joanna Wallace and Emma Towns at the New Zealand stand during the summer camp's international evening.

## Kits encourage greater awareness

The Nelson Hearing Association has been promoting greater use of their 'Hear More or Less' curriculum based resource kits for schools with the help of a grant from the Oticon Foundation.

The kits, which aim to teach children how to communicate with hearing impaired or deaf people and to protect their own hearing, were originally produced four years ago and distributed to schools in the greater Nelson area.

"While the kits were initially well received and used, we suspected that with changing staff in schools, many teachers may not be aware that the resource was available," says Claire Williams.

The Oticon Foundation grant was

used to cover the cost of contracting a person to contact schools in the area to remind them about the kit and distribute additional copies.



Claire Williams (right) explaining a Hear More or Less kit to a representative from a Nelson school.

"The Foundation grant has allowed us to encourage greater use of the kits and foster better understanding about hearing loss among students. We've also raised awareness about the resource among teachers of the deaf and other organisations working in the hearing loss sector."

Claire says the kits have proved to be very effective in promoting respect for people with hearing loss and teaching students about communicating in general.

"The kits have been particularly effective when a child with hearing loss starts school or for a student recently fitted with hearing aids, making the adjustment easier for them and their family."



# audiologists



## Grants fund hearing loops

Members of St Ninian's Uniting Church that are hearing impaired will be better able to enjoy church services following an Oticon Foundation grant to install a hearing loop and fund part of a new sound system.

St Ninian's property committee convener Murray Lambert says the Wellington church wanted to install the new equipment to provide better listening conditions for its congregation, many of whom use hearing aids.

"The hearing loop will allow hearing impaired people to participate more fully in church services while the additions to

the sound system will improve sound clarity in the church for everyone's benefit."

The Foundation grant also funded the purchase of a replacement tape recorder to record church services for people that are sick, infirm or can't attend.

Following an extensive rebuilding project, St Ninian's had little left in its budget to install the new sound equipment.

"We wouldn't have been able to install this equipment without the Oticon Foundation's support. We have always been aware of the needs of people in the church that are hearing impaired - the new equipment will make a tremendous difference to meeting their needs.

Murray says the church hopes its newly extended building will be able to be used as a facility for the wider community. "This means the new equipment will provide benefits for everyone that uses the church."

The Stoke Community Centre also received a grant to install a hearing loop in its clubrooms. Treasurer Roger Cole says the hearing loop will enable those in the Centre's 60+ club as well as those using the venue's daycare services to be more involved in the activities and programmes it runs.



Reverend Robin Lane of St Ninian's Uniting Church.

## Grant supports study on adjustment to hearing loss

The Oticon Foundation last year allocated a number of grants for ongoing education in the hearing loss area.

Study grant recipients included profoundly deaf psychologist Bruce Kent, who received a grant to assist him to complete his PhD in Health Science. Bruce's study focuses on assessing the role of hope in people adjusting to acquired hearing loss.

"The study provides further evidence of the psychological and social aspects involved in hearing loss. From my research it is clear that adjusting to hearing loss is strongly linked to the level of hope that people have in terms of gaining control back over this aspect of their life."

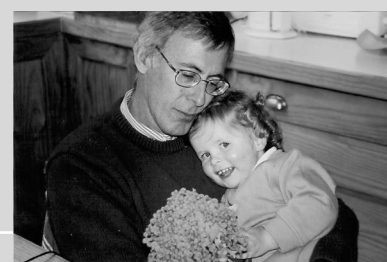
Bruce hopes the information gained from his study will benefit hearing care professionals in having an increased understanding of some of the non-audiological factors in the adjustment process.

"Greater awareness of these factors is likely to enhance the effectiveness of 'interventions' such as hearing aids in assisting people to accommodate deafness in their life."

"This is an area of development in hearing support services. Each new piece of research adds to our understanding and helps to refine the patient care procedures that are used."

Bruce says he also hopes that completing his PhD will demonstrate that profoundly deaf people can attain high levels of academic achievement.

"It's also important that people who are deaf are given a 'voice' in the rehabilitation services that are provided."



Bruce Kent with his daughter.

# Oticon Foundation grant recipients 2003

**ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF THE DEAF (NZ INC)** travel grant, for representatives to attend DEANZ Deaf Education Forum meetings

**BARBARA HAY, RESOURCE TEACHER OF DEAF** study grant, Auditory Verbal Therapy

**BRUCE KENT, DEAF DOCTORAL STUDENT** research grant, psychosocial rehabilitation of people with acquired hearing loss

**CAROLE BENNETT, ITINERANT TEACHER OF THE DEAF** research grant, Developing Listening Skills in Deaf Children

**DEAF ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)** travel grant, for Executive Board members to attend the World Federation of the Deaf Congress and Conference in Montreal, Canada

**DEAFINITELY YOUTH GROUP** travel grant, for DEAFinitely Youth Group members to attend and present a paper at the International Deaf Youth Camp, and attend the World Federation of the Deaf Conference and Youth Forum in Canada

**DIEM MAI, AUDIOLOGIST** travel grant, to attend Eriksholm Summer Camp for Young Audiologists in Denmark

**EMMA TOWNS, AUDIOLOGIST** travel grant, to attend Eriksholm Summer Camp for Young Audiologists in Denmark

**FRANKLY SPEAKING PIX** project grant, to develop a documentary for NZ secondary schools about the Silent World Theatre group

**THE HEARING ASSOCIATION - MANAWATU BRANCH** equipment grant, for a portable Soundfield system for use in meeting places in the Manawatu

**THE HEARING ASSOCIATION - HUTT VALLEY BRANCH** equipment grant, for screening audiometers to provide more services to the community

**THE HEARING ASSOCIATION NELSON INC** support towards producing more Hear More or Less kits for schools

**THE HEARING ASSOCIATION - TIMARU BRANCH** equipment grant, for impedance audiometer to provide more services to the community

**JILL SELWOOD, RESOURCE TEACHER OF THE DEAF** research grant, Evaluation of Deaf Mentor Services in the Waikato

**JOANNA WALLACE, AUDIOLOGIST** travel grant, to attend Eriksholm Summer Camp for Young Audiologists in Denmark

**NZ SIGN LANGUAGE TUTORS ASSOCIATION** project grant, to fund Video Project Coordinator to produce NZSL Videotext Units 7-12

**PARENT TO PARENT NELSON** equipment grant, to supply a laptop to a multihandicapped hearing impaired child

**SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS ASSN OF NZ (SLIANZ)** support towards the 2003 SLIANZ Conference

**THE SOUTHERN HEARING CHARITABLE TRUST** equipment grant, for clinical audiometer to provide enhanced services to clients

**ST NINIANS UNITING PARISH** equipment grant, for hearing loop and sound reinforcement system for St Ninians Uniting Church

**THE STOKES COMMUNITY CENTRE (INC)** equipment grant, for hearing loop for the Stokes Community Centre

**SUE PERRY, TEACHER OF THE DEAF** travel grant, to present a paper at the 2003 Australian and New Zealand Conference for Educators of the Deaf - Perth, Australia

**TE ARO SCHOOL** equipment grant, for Soundfield systems for bilingual classes with Deaf students

**WILLIE SIMMONS, TEACHER-AIDE FOR DEAF STUDENTS** study grant, Deaf Studies at Victoria University

## 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 to:

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

[www.oticon.org.nz](http://www.oticon.org.nz)